

A.N.R. ROBINSON, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, address at the launching of the Capital Investment Programme of Pan Trinbago on May 29. This part of his speech.

THIS OCCASION is one of great significance not only for the steelband movement, but for the nation. It is also of particular significance for me as the steelband, by reason of its origin, its history, its achievement and its promise for the future, has been and continues to be one of the great sources of inspiration in my life.

If I am asked to identify two symbols of the genius of the West Indian people and of the height of our possibility, I would immediately identify West Indian Cricket and the steelband.

If one does not recognise this, it would be difficult to understand the pride of the victors of World Wars I and II in winning three one-day games against a team which the defected Australians described as including some ancient warriors among them.

The record of that team over the last 20 years is regarded throughout the world as phenomenal — West Indians have placed their own distinctive stamp on cricket, reached the top and have transformed the game.

Here, less than two generations ago, the most deprived members of the urban sector of this society, built upon the age-old tradition of the drum.

They tuned a steel membrane and made oil drums capable of interpreting the most complex and sophisticated musical forms. This is a remarkable event and again illustrates the triumph of human ingenuity and human endeavour, over formidable social and economic odds.

The work of a generation of pioneers has laid a foundation of instrumental technology, most of it intuitively derived, upon which today's Movement can proceed.

But little of this triumph was achieved because of money. In fact, the greatest triumph of the human spirit has been not in times of abundance but in scarcity.

In many respects, our society has a great deal to learn from the early pan pioneers because they have taught us so many valuable lessons about the transformation of the unlikely into the valuable; about the primacy of

invention and the importance of self-reliance. These are lessons which our society has always needed, and never more than in these present times when the money to buy our way out of trouble is just not available.

In fact, the money that we are talking about tonight is money that has been earned in the hardest of ways and at great sacrifice. As you know these are funds obtained from the Tesoro Settlement.

Good Over Evil

We forget at our peril that, while the genius of our people has produced the Steelband, it has also produced the most ingenious and complicated forms of white collar crime.

This is the most fitting use that can be made of money so regained as the steelband itself symbolises the triumph of good over evil, of light over darkness of hope over despair.

In this sense it also incorporates and syncretises one of the most quintessential elements of our East Indian heritage — Divali.

There will, therefore, be

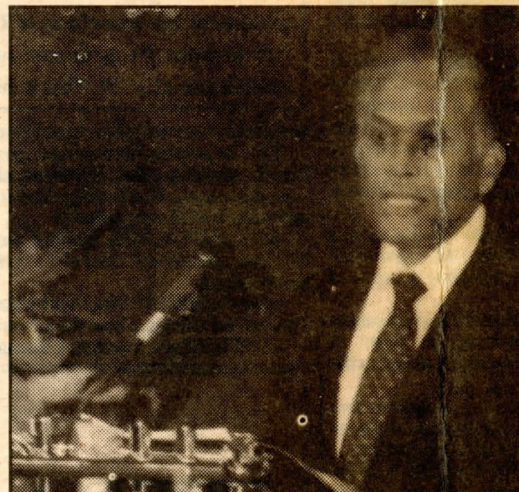
hardly any occasion that will give me as Prime Minister greater pride and satisfaction than this. Spree Simon and Rudolph Charles are folk heroes; never to be forgotten by pan people, but as yet unrecognised by the wider society for their seminal contributions to the kind of development which a society such as ours so desperately needs.

It is a matter of concern to those of us who hold the destiny of this country in trust that the work of a Lincoln Noel, a Leo Coker, a Bertram Kellman or a Birdie Manette is not perceived as having the most important implications for national development.

Each time that their brains, their energy, their ears and their inventiveness create a new note, a sound is made which not only has to do with music, but which is a sound saying to all of us that our native talent can take us very much further than we believe.

Open Doors

Through the investment by this Government of \$7.5 million in the steelband movement, many significant challenges are being thrown down, and it is greatly to the



PRIME MINISTER A.N.R. ROBINSON
addresses the function

credit of today's steelband leaders that they have recognised the value of having a lump sum.

This ceremony is evidence of the leadership's understanding that such a sum of money ought not to be frittered away, as has happened to our national patrimony, upon recurrent expenditures.

Today is, therefore, a day of many-sided significance, also bringing together, as it does, two apparently disparate social sectors to inaugurate an era of new

mutual respect, interdependence and economic progress.

To the steelbandsmen and women and to these professionals I say you have much to learn from each other and indeed, I understand that the relationship has already yielded a seminar on management and leadership, as the President of Pan Trinbago has mentioned, during which the Pan Trinbago Executive were engaged in a weekend encounter with many of the

distinguished citizens whom steelbandsmen have been wise enough to draw into their orbit.

Those of you, I say to the steelbandsmen, who will assist the Movement in the establishment of its Foundation, the Steelband Industrialisation Project, the Steelband Investment Fund, the Panyard Improvement Project and the Music School together with the experts who have been selected for this enterprise will learn much about style of popular leadership.

The experts will recognise the value of community cultural values and the steelbandsmen and women will expand your knowledge of the world of affairs with new insights into the souls of the folk and into the various forms of expertise.

You are undertaking to manage a sum of money in a certain way with a certain competence, honesty and astuteness.

In such circumstances, the way forward may be slower than you would like but in time, you will begin to appreciate the need to apply to other areas of life the same qualities you so amply demonstrate in your music, namely attention to detail and

a clear and mutual understanding of all the relevant actions and processes.

And please may I ask you never to forget that I am eager as you are to see improvements in the state of your panyards. I am as anxious as you are to see plans for your music school on the campus of the University of the West Indies, moving apace.

Similarly, I look for speedy action in the proper establishment and implementation of all your Capital Investment enterprises.

Testing Time

This is, therefore, testing time for your leadership. The way is clear for you to make all kinds of progress in the areas of management, marketing and commercial endeavour. But it must not be forgotten that the product which lies at the heart of these concerns is your music.

It is the quality of your music which justifies the investment which today's ceremony is noting. And you know that in the pursuit of excellence, there are no short cuts. There

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can be no wavering of discipline in the panyards.

The ordinary panman has never been more important to the movement than he is today. This investment of money will in time, make, for example, better and cheaper instruments available to you.

It, therefore, becomes a matter of pressing concern and urgency that you pursue your destiny as the country's foremost musicians, with dedication and a determination to give your music all that it deserves.

And indeed, your skills will be on display as never before when 1992, next year, the celebration of our achievements will be presented to all the Caribbean artists, and indeed to the artists of the world, who will gather here for Carifesta which will take place between the ninth and the sixteenth of August.

Pan History

Your year will begin with what, I anticipate, will be the most musically innovative and disciplined Panorama in the history of pan. It will

continue with your festival, part of which, we hope, will coincide with Carifesta.

I urge you to dig deeply into that vast repertoire of the world, which you have not yet thought of playing, to give to our people, and the world, the amazing sounds of steel as they have never heard before.

You have a duty, with your music, to warm their hearts and inspire their souls. So much is there to be done. So much is there to be given. These are indeed, times of such immense possibility!

In taking public note of your plans and programmes, I am acknowledging on behalf of the government and people of Trinidad and Tobago, the high esteem in which Pan Trinbago, its membership and its products, are held. In a sense, this has already been done with the nation's highest award the Trinity Cross, to the steelband, to Pan Trinbago four years ago.

I have already publicly proclaimed the year 1992 as the Year of the Arts. You have been given the means to make that proclamation a

reality for pan.

Let your panyards become models of discipline, good order and fabulous music so that all the world may say of you in 1992 that this was "your finest hour." Make your yards places which are safe for the younger generations who already hold you in high regard and who yearn to take their places beside you on the high rack.

Welcome the visitor to your yards and make them the focus of community solidarity and community pride, wherever they are located.

Welcome your new associates and admit them to your councils. Share your wisdom with them and show them the ways of your experience. Above all, remember that, on this night you enter into a new and solemn covenant with the people of your country.

Go forward, therefore, in peace. Let the strains of your music reverberate around the world. Inspire the faint hearted, strengthen the weak, love and serve the brotherhood, be a delight to lovers of truth and beauty and human excellence.

And as you lift others up, so by God's grace, may you, our panmen and panwomen be lifted up.

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