

I CAN'T SEE HOW THE HOTELS ARE UNDERPAYING THESE STEELBANDSMEN

ML1040

THE EDITOR: Mr. Jeffrey Chapman, General Secretary of the Tobago Steelbands Association, is reported to have said inter alia in an article that was published in your newspaper last Monday, under the caption "Hotels underpay us, say panmen", that they (meaning the Tobago Panmen), had thought of forming an association since last year, as they felt the National Association of Trinidad and Tobago was not doing enough for Tobago.

While I do not wish to enter into any dialogue at this stage as to what panmen should or should not do as far as their organising operations are concerned, I consider it an obligation to refute the misleading statement made by Mr. Chapman.

Before doing so however, I will like to point out that my refutation is not intended to cause any embarrassment to either Mr. Chapman or any panman in Tobago, since I can well understand Mr. Chapman's obvious reasons for making such a statement.

It is, rather, to inform the public correctly (and more so the Panmen and people of Tobago) who might be inclined to accept Mr. Chapman's reported accusa-

a financial statement of account from the Tobago branch.

This with the exception of once, can also be said of the South Trinidad branch of the association).

I will now like to mention just some of the benefits received from the association by Tobago panmen over the last eight years.

In 1964 two Tobago panmen namely Morrison Romeo, of Old Oak Starlift in Canaan and Clunis Clarke, of Casbah in Roxborough visited some 13 States in the USA through the association.

the management of the hotels now.

I must confess that on reading the article to which I earlier in this letter referred. I could not honestly come to any other conclusion than that the panmen in Tobago were not underpaid by the hotels.

GEORGE GODDARD
A Dedicated Citizen.

EQUIPMENT

In 1965 and 1967 again through the association, these two Tobago panmen visited the UK Canada and New York respectively, and between these years each of these two Tobago Panmen was in receipt of more finance from the association than any other panman the whole of Trinidad.

There are others too who are from Tobago and were members of the National Steelband, who did not go on tour but received also finance from the association.

In 1965 the Tobago branch was given by the association a typewriter and other office equipment.

In 1967, the association's central body spent well over \$2000 in folding costs, cooking and eating utensils etc. to accommodate for some four days at the Tranquillity Government Girls School, sixty Panmen from the Texaco Katzen Jammers of Black Rock and Mt. Irvine Development Buccooners of Buccoo Point for the steelband festival.

Added to this, the association paid for the truck transport of instruments and the taxi transport of men.

TAXI PASSAGE

In 1969 the association paid for the air return and taxi passage for a number of Tobago panmen from various steelbands in Tobago to attend its two day seminar at the Adult Education Centre, St. Anns, as well as paid for their accommodation for three days.

For this the Government Community Development Department was paid over \$800 by the association for meals for the Tobago panmen alone.

For Carnival 1971 the association on the request of the Tobago branch spent over \$600 send three judges and an official to judge the Tobago Panorama preliminary and finals.

Between April 1968 and June 1971 the return air transport was paid on every occasion by the association for two Tobago panmen to attend meetings of the executive of the association.

DOG EAT DOG

They were also given allowances for taxi transport and hotel accommodation

Mr. Bertille St. Claire of Our Boys steelband in Scarborough was a vice-president from 1970 and is still a vice-president because of not submitting to date as far as I am aware, a letter of resignation.

The reason for Tobago steelbands getting only between \$40 and \$75 per night for performances at hotels at Tobago, is mainly because of the cut throat and dog eat dog behaviour of a number of steelbands in Tobago. These steelbands have been operating against the directives of the association for years now. Mr. Jeffrey Chapman's band Carib Dixieland of Mt. Pleasant being the chief offender, as the leaders of a number of Tobago Steelbands can verify, so Mr. Chapman ought not to blame

Your Opinion

tion against the National Association of Steelbandsmen of which I was president general for eleven years, ending on July 5, last.

First I would like to remind the public, that Mr. Chapman was the person nominated to contest the election for the office of president general, late last year (1970) against me, and received a total of some six or seven votes.

As from 1963 all funds paid to the Association of Steelbandsmen by the panmen in Tobago were paid directly to the Tobago branch of the association.

PROFITS

The average sum of money paid to the Tobago branch and more so between 1966 and 1971 was \$60 a year per steelband.

Between this latter period the association had a membership comprised of the members of some 16 steelbands which would mean that the Tobago branch should have been in receipt of funds of not less than \$960 a year from contribution alone.

Added to this whatever profits was realised from functions (festivals etc.) by the Tobago Branch were kept by the Tobago branch.

Between the years 1963 and 1971, it was once and once only that any sum was received by the central body of the association and this was some time in 1968 or 1969 when a sum of \$500 was given on loan by the Tobago branch, to assist in the payment of the return air passage of two adjudicators from the UK. The adjudicators wages and hotel accommodation for three weeks involved a sum of over \$7,000.00.

STATEMENT

Between the years 1963 and 1971, as can be verified by the present Mayor of Arima, Councilor Egbert Alleyne, Julien Goddard, Cedric Lewis (all general secretaries of the association during this period) and Kemrick Thomas (treasurer), I am not aware of the central executive of the association receiving as much as once