

PAN NOT ON THE MOVE

President resigns in wave of protests

STAFF REPORTER

ARNIM SMITH, President of the national steelbandsmen organisation — Pan Trinbago — yesterday angrily resigned the post amidst a flurry of legal letters sent to Pan Trinbago from disgruntled steelbandsmen.

In chucking the job, Mr. Smith, 39, who recently returned from a government-sponsored mission to Sweden, charged that panmen were not serious about the total development of the movement and instead were suffering from a "Panorama mentality."

At least four steelbands sent missives from their legal representatives demanding that they be included in the national semi-finals of the 1984 Panorama; the finals of the pan round-the-neck competition; or that the national semi-finals be postponed, among other claims.

In a clearly exasperated mood, Mr. Smith wrote the following to his executive:

"I hereby submit my letter of resignation as President of Pan Trinbago, since it is my feeling that the sacrifice I have made as an executive member of Pan Trinbago for the past nine years has been fruitless in trying to elevate the steelband movement in the right direction in which the steelbandsmen has not appreciated.

"It is my opinion that what existed at the beginning of my term nine years ago is the same: there is no improvement in the mentality of the steelband men. Letters have come in from bands demanding that they should be included in the competition.

"This is a step to carry back the movement and an attempt to destroy all that I have done for the movement and as such I have no other alternative but to resign."

Contacted later, Mr. Smith, a self-employed father of three, said he was not prepared to put up with the childish behaviour of panmen anymore.

He elaborated:

"I have exposed myself to personal abuse, personal sacrifice and other trying situations in order to do my small part to uplift the steelbandsmen and the movement as a whole during the past nine years.

"My children hardly see me and now, when one thought that at last panmen were developing a sense of maturity, today Pan Trinbago received several letters from various

steelbands threatening this and demanding that.

"This is being done after all entrants signed a form agreeing that the judges' decision will be final. I have had enough of this and I don't think some panmen are really serious about the direction the movement should take."

"Imagine getting solicitor's letters from certain steelbands formed only for competing in panorama...after Carnival they done with that...is that fair to us who have to face the music every day of the year in order to raise the dignity of the panman?"

Letters were received by Pan Trinbago from the following steelbands:

JADAPT (Pan Round the Neck). Writing on their behalf, D.V. Warner and Company, demanded that the band be included in the finals of this category slated for March 2, 1984.

EMERGENCY MEETING

"Having regard to the facts set out hereinabove we shall appreciate a reply by return, while our clients reserve the right to seek redress in the appropriate forum."

JADAPT is claiming that after being placed sixth in the preliminaries they prepared for playing in the finals only to be told later that in fact they got seventh berth, thereby eliminated from the big night.

T. Roosevelt Guerra, acting for Merritones Steelband, wrote the Chairman of the Joint Management Committee, promising to seek the assistance of the court to properly interpret the rules, regarding the inclusion of Valley Harps to receive prize money and appearance fees.

U. Rudolph Martin wrote Pan Trinbago saying he was instructed by his clients, Players Symphony Steel Orchestra, that because of certain circumstances the band must be included in the national semi-finals on Thursday at the Queen's Park Savannah in Port of Spain, among other demands.

Carib Tokyo, through its secretary, is asking that the semi-finals be postponed until a matter involving the points they obtained is settled.

The issues raised by the steelbands up to last night were like dark shadows over the Panorama competitions this weekend. Because of the seriousness of the situation Pan Trinbago has summoned an emergency meeting of all steelbands executives for 10 a.m. today.