

Taradath: Teachers criticise students with interest in pan

TC 960830 P.15

By SEAN NERO

"WE NEED to put schools in pan, not pan in schools." This is the view of Lloyd Best, economist/social commentator, which he expressed during a call-in panel discussion with the theme "Let's talk pan," carried by Caribbean Radio Tempo last Tuesday night.

The panel also included Owen Serrette, president of Pan Trinbago; Selwyn Taradath, education officer; Gideon Maxine, author/cultural researcher and Professor Ajumu Nyomba of Clark Atlanta University. It was moderated by Sookram Ali.

Best said there was need for a new approach to address the question of education and the steelband. "Pan is at the centre of excellence. We don't have many centres of excellence, therefore we need to build our future on the triumphs that already exist."

He expressed dissatisfaction with the current school system which he described as

a "technical, cultural and social failure."

Selwyn Taradath defended the school system which he claimed was not being properly implemented. Teachers, he said, did not acknowledge the potential in the nation's youth.

Students who were involved in music, pan and sports came under heavy criticism by teachers who saw these activities as being in no way beneficial to their future in terms of employment. Society, he said, had a role to play in nurturing the ability and talent of our youth.

Owen Serrette, Pan Trinbago's president said that for him the high point of "Steelband Week" would be the youth rally scheduled for Friday. For the past six years he said the question of pan and education had been his focus. He pointed to the small number of youths involved in pan making/tuning.

Professor Ajumu Nyomba told of the phenomenal growth of pan in the US. He was

impressed with the many steelband schools in Trinidad and Tobago, but lamented there was not the teaching of pan playing on the school curriculum.

He noted that Ellie Mannette taught classes in pan tuning at Clark Atlanta University. The school conducted summer courses in pan playing, arranging and the basic steps in pan tuning.

ML
1040