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Controversial pan accounts still in Valley Harps hands

DISPUTED financial documents of Pan Trinidad for 1971-1973 are in the hands of Mr. Gary Simmons, a member of the organisation.

How he came in possession of the documents came out at Sunday's stormy convention of the steelbandmen organisation during which Mr. Roy Augustus, President, and three other executive officers resigned their posts.

Representing the Valley Harps Steelband of Diego Martin, Mr. Simmons walked into the meeting with a brief case with the documents.

He said that they were sent to an accountant to be audited but the accountant refused to "touch the papers."

Mr. Simmons said he went to the accountant on Friday and was given the documents to take back to Pan Trinidad. He went to Pan Trinidad's office on Queen Street, Port-of-Spain, to deliver them but he found the office closed.

At Sunday's meeting, he refused to hand them in until he got a receipt. No one signed so he went home with the briefcase and papers.

Sunday's special convention was convened to receive audited accounts and to accept the new constitution. Only the accounts were discussed.

A main point advanced by executive members was that they were not in office for the 1971-1973 period. Mr. Augustus said that apparently the previous treasurers had no idea of what they were doing.

When the luncheon adjournment was about to be taken, Mr. Augustus said that they could decide either of two things: wipe the accounts off and start Pan Trinidad's financial affairs from 1974, or, where possible, press for the prosecution of those responsible for the accounts as suggested by other speakers.

On the resumption, Mr. George Yeates, of WITCO Gay Desperadoes, questioned the financial documents based on "new information" received.

This prompted another verbal clash between floor members. Obscene words were used. Those who used the obscenities were quick to apologise.

Announcing his resignation, Mr. Augustus, said that he wanted to do so at a previous meeting of the executive, but was asked to stay on.

He said he examined his conscience "to see if what I

did during 1971 to 1973 was correct."

"I examined my conscience and I have done a hell of a lot but I have compromised with my conscience.

"I want to thank all those who have rallied to my support during the past years."

He said that because of very vocal opposition, he was quitting as an officer, but he was not leaving Pan Trinidad. "I will continue to represent my steelband, Port Contractors City Symphony."

Mr. Bertie Fraser, Education Officer, in his resignation speech, said that he found it difficult to carry out programmes he had worked out for the panmen.

An anthropologist with the National Cultural Council, Mr. Fraser added: "What we do here will show up in time... whether we were right or wrong."

Mr. Vere Greer, a trustee, said he believed in the maxim rule of the people by the people, and if the people do not want you, you must back down."

After the resignations, a vote of "no confidence" was passed in the rest of the executive.

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