

Do the panmen share Bertie's view?

THE EDITOR: I was truly sickened by a letter a few weeks ago, quoted in your paper, written by the present president of Pan Trinbago, the legal representatives of our nation's steelbands.

In this letter he attempted to disassociate the steelband movement from certain personal statements made in support of the oil and sugar workers at a meeting in Woodford Square by one of our nation's top steelbandsmen.

He was quick to point out that panmen's business had nothing to do with the current crisis in the country.

When one considers that the steelbandsmen has always been at the lowest rung of the ladder in this society, exploited by big business, the CDC, the Tourist Board and all who have ever found a way to make bread off our backs, when one considers that apart from a token here and there, this government has shown gross neglect and wanton disregard for our real problems and sufferings, notwithstanding their glorious pan consultation of a few years ago, one finds it quite strange that our learned president can see no connection between our suffering and the suffering of our people in oil and sugar.

But steelbandsmen are accustomed to their leadership touting the big politicians and the Government. Does the current effort by Pan Trinbago to get a 6,000,000 subvention from Government, have some-

thing to do with this latest trend by Mr. Bertie Fraser and company.

In the first place, what makes Mr. Fraser think that his view on a serious matter like this, is the view of panmen? Did he call a general meeting to get a consensus of opinion? Did he call even an executive meeting to hear the views of the top representatives of panmen all over the country? I know that the answers to these questions are No! In other words, his opinion of separating suffering panmen from suffering oil and sugar cane workers and farmers is entirely his own opinion.

DISGRACEFUL SHOW

I wonder also what this leader of steelbandsmen, has to say about that disgraceful show, by our nation's so-called top steelband - the Maritime Life Hatters, a few days ago, when they took part in that stage-managed anti-working class, performance put on by the minority PNM regime on Harris Promenade.

Mr. Fraser and other Pan "leaders" are always quick to criticise the eastern region for what they consider playing politics with panmen; that is to say, of course anti-government politics. What has he and his group to say now about that shameless prostitution of our steelband movement for the PNM Government, who

as Mr. Fraser himself is well aware has done absolutely nothing to better our position; in fact have done so much to further sell us out.

How come he has not run to the press and disassociated the steelband movement from this show of support? Or are panmen only allowed to identify with one side in our nation's present crisis?

I do hope that the Hatters are fully aware of how much damage they have done to their immense popularity after last Carnival's performances. Imagine they almost got People's Choice! Right now they are assured of being, for the most 28 per cent of the People's Choice.

Without the eastern region of Pan Trinbago, which up to now, seems quite unwilling to sell their souls, I wonder what would become of our steelband movement and its leadership.

TRUE PANMAN,
Tunapuna.