

MLP040

EXPRESS

Features Section

HAS STEEL BAND PUSHED ITSELF OUT OF CARNIVAL?



Amin Mohammed, Chairman of the Interim Carnival Development Committee

CARNIVAL was to be his trial. Amin Mohammed, appointed chairman of the Interim Carnival Development Committee (CDC) by the fledgling National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR) Government, would either be hailed as a hero or he would be condemned to take his place among a long line of villains. The judges for his trial would not be those controversial judges of the CDC. The judges would be the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

"What is the most undeserved criticism the CDC received this year?" Mohammed repeats this reporter's question and leans back in the executive chair in an upstairs office of the Republic Bank, Park Street, Port of Spain.

"I'll tell you what was our most deserved criticism," he says after a long pause.

"It was the Kiddies Carnival. The failure of the experiment with the steelbands had a major dampening effect on Carnival — the worse I have seen in a long time. The motive, which is so important in anything you do, was good. Looking back, I would still say the motive was good," says Mohammed.

He is careful to appear analytical and responsible but expresses disappointment about the major incident which tarnished Carnival.

"We had 45 steelbands contracted to play and about 15 bands appeared. It was very unfortunate, very painful. The CDC put its head on a block for some people and they didn't come

mantle. That is ridiculous. We ended up begging for help from the regiment because I was not going to pay that money. We must find an alternative."

He would also do away with the North Stand. "It is too dangerous. Security is too difficult. There are just too many problems."

One of the few times a smile crosses that pensive face of Mohammed is when he is asked if the CDC could ever please the public and participants of Carnival.

"It is unfortunate that we as a people always have to find a reason for faults which sometimes lie within ourselves. It is easier to blame someone else, the competition or the CDC for our own disappointment at not winning.

"We also have to remember that we are dealing with artistic and emotional people who get even more emotional around Carnival. But I think widespread dissatisfaction could be avoided or limited if the CDC is given the authority to do what it should and the

By DEBBIE JACOB

Many of the problems such as the consistently failing sound system, Mohammed attributes to the lack of time the committee had to work with. In spite of the problems there were moments of pride for Mohammed. The North Panorama semifinals and the Calypso Fiesta in Skinner Park are two. "Except for the sound problems at the Calypso Fiesta, I think things went well. In Skinner Park, the calypsonians' facilities were improved upon."

He is not, however, proud of the

resources - including time to do its job."

When asked about the Calypso Queen Singing Sandra's elimination from the CDC national calypso monarch semifinals Mohammed says, "That I would say was the most unfair criticism levelled at the CDC for Carnival 1987.

"The competition in which Sandra was crowned queen was not a CDC competition. I saw her perform at that show (sponsored by the National Womens Action Committee of NJAC) and felt she gave a brilliant performance. She is an excellent performer. Unfortunately judges are concerned with a performance —and not a person and at the particular time Sandra was judged by the CDC, her performance was not up to par."

Mohammed says he would like to see some

Continued on page 24