

MR 1043

# President tells of panic among panmen

PAN TRINBAGO, the umbrella organisation of steelbandmen in Trinidad and Tobago, is unable to "contain the panic" of its members about the extent of their participation in Carnival 1975.

This admission was made yesterday by Mr. Bertie Fraser, President of Pan Trinbago, speaking about moves the executive have made to officialdom to get better conditions for panmen.

These overtures among them, a subvention from Government to enable the organisation to serve members properly, are yet to materialise.

He explained:

"I have been trying to convince steelbandmen that certain developments that have taken place outside of their expectations have not been deliberate attempts to thwart their interest and that the several approaches made to Government and private enterprise have not fallen on deaf ears.

"But the nearness of Car-

nival 1975, and the state of panic in which steelbands are in, is too much for the executive to contain."

On Friday, disgruntled members of Pan Trinbago's Eastern region closed down the organisation's headquarters in Port-of-Spain, by nailing two pieces of board across the doors.

They protested the dilapidated condition of the office including the lack of water, toilet facilities, telephone and electricity.

Mr. Fraser, a Folklorist with the National Culture Council, said that the approximate cost of bringing out a steelband on Carnival days, was in the vicinity of \$10-\$20,000, which most bands cannot afford by themselves.

And fifty per cent of the steelbands, he added, were unsponsored.

He also pointed to the increasing cost of steeldrums, transportation, tuning fees and equipment.

Although one can be had at a lower cost the price of one good steeldrum was in the region of \$30.

Mr. Fraser said:

"Finally, Panorama and Carnival constitute the major events in which steelbandmen make their national contribution and many of us project fears about the extent of our bands' participation in Carnival next year."

He expressed the hope that positive efforts would be made in time to give panmen greater hope for the forthcoming season.