

GODDARD SUGGESTS WAYS TO HELP THE PANMEN

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*Today's
\$5 letter*

THE EDITOR:

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago will be sponsoring a Steelband Conference on January, 29.

What good is going to emerge from this conference, heaven (if not hell), alone knows, since the same Government over the years from 1962 to 1970, failed to put into operation recommendations submitted by the Association of Steelbandsmen, and by at least five Government-appointed Steelband Committees under the Chairmanships of Dr. Ralph Romain, Andrew Carr - Ronald Williams, M.P. Alladin (twice), and Max Cuffie.

Operation

Added to these the Government also failed to put into operation decisions arrived at between the Prime Minister and representatives of well over one hundred Steelbands of five meetings held at the residence of the Prime Minister in March and April of 1972, not to mention recommendations submitted by me in my then capacity of Advisor to the Government on the Improvement of Steelband Music in 1969 and 1970. Since the main prob-

lem faced by the Panmen (ie tuners, arrangers, beaters), is that of BREAD (finance). I will once more like to suggest to the Government a few meaningful and practical solutions:-

1. Employ on a permanent basis with rights to gratuity and pension worked out on the basis of their ages, at least eight of the prominent, resident Pan Tuners in Trinidad and Tobago for the specific purpose of

Arrangers

(a) preparing instruments for distribution at minimum cost to steelbands in Trinidad and Tobago;

(b) preparing instruments for export if required; and

(c) teaching the art of Pan Tuning to panman, students at school and members of youth groups, camps etc.

2. Employ on the same basis as No. 1 above at least six panmen arrangers in Trinidad and two at Tobago for the specific purpose in relation to arranging as stated in 1 (a) and (c) above.

3. Commence discussions with the heads of the various USA state governments, universities, colleges etc., with a view, of getting as many

states as possible to sponsor, a steelband on meaningful tours during their summer periods.

4. Request the business sector in the country to make annually, meaningful financial contributions to a National Cultural Fund part of which should be utilised in financial assistance to panbeaters.

5. Encourage hotels (ie Hilton Normandie, Crown Point etc), and night spots (ie Pent House, La Tropical etc), to employ steelbands for periods of not less than 3 evenings a week, (during the tourist and carnival periods in particular), and for wages of not less than \$50.00 per week per pan beater.

6. Assist the members of steelbands in the setting up of co-operatives in fields in which they might be familiar, or can be easily trained.

7. Commence discussions with the Government and business sector of Venezuela with a view of having organised in

Venezuela, meaningful and profitable performances by steelbands.

8. Have established a steelband research council comprised of the said employed pan tuners, representatives of the Faculty of Engineering of the U.W.I. and qualified musicians, for the specific purpose of doing further research and experiments on steelband instruments, with a view of producing better and standardised instruments as decided on at the meetings of representatives of steelbands and the Prime Minister in March - April of 1970.

These are just a few of the suggestions that I will once more like to make to the Government if they are seriously and honestly interested in the further development of the steelbands, and the economic emancipation of its members.

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