

Voice Of The People Bands Armed With 'Lethal' Weapons

The Editor, "Trinidad Guardian"
Our Government decided that the people in Trinidad were to be allowed to hold a "Carnival" on June 6 in connection with the celebrations of Her Majesty's Coronation.

Numerous large bands were allowed to roam about the streets armed with baseball bats or heavy wooden staves. It is beyond the comprehension of law-abiding citizens why these irresponsibles—mostly full of liquor—should have been allowed to go about armed with these lethal weapons.

The Commissioner of Police issues lengthy regulations about the behaviour and dress of revellers taking part in Carnival. It would seem that, if any thought had been given to the matter, these same regulations would have prohibited the carrying of weapons of any kind.

It is reported in the Press that there were eight or ten clashes between steel bands resulting in more than 200 casualties of one kind or another. Bottles were thrown in profusion with no regard to the safety of the public. A police officer who tried to intervene had his tunic slashed with a razor. An onlooker named Bernard O'Connor is alleged to have been hit on the head and killed by a man carrying a baseball bat. O'Connor leaves a widow and young children.

It reflects very badly on this Colony, and is really a disgrace to Trinidad, that such things were allowed to happen under the guise of celebrating the Coronation of Her Majesty the Queen.

It is to be hoped that the Government will learn a lesson from this horrible experience and realise that in future it will be better not to grant facilities for a repeat performance. If, however, opportunity has to be given for this licentiousness, the least Government can do is to prohibit the carrying of weapons and to exercise strict control. This may prevent the loss of life, the wounds and hurts caused to so many people, and the disgraceful scenes that occurred last Saturday.

CITIZEN.

Port-of-Spain.

[Regulations were in fact issued by the Commissioner of Police on May 15, prohibiting "any collection of persons numbering 10 or more being armed with sticks or other weapons of offence."—Ed., T.G.]