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Panyards as craft centres in off-season suggested

PANYARDS should be used during the off-season as workshops and handicraft centres.

This is the view of some steelbandmen, according to Papers presented to the National Consultation on the Steelband, which opened at Convention Centre, Chaguaramas, yesterday.

They feel that greater use should be made of the panyards, especially in view of the fact that many of the panmen are unemployed.

Mr. Hudson Greig, captain of Alcoa Boys Town Steelband, in a Paper, suggests that the panyard could be used during the day for "cottage industries." This extra activity would go a long way in linking the steelbandmen with the other members of their immediate community, apart from providing an honest means for them to earn a living.

Skillco Melotones steelband has recommended the use of panyards as an avenue for employment for skilled and unskilled members. Tutors should be commissioned, especially in handicraft, to instruct steelbandmen during the off-season.

Furthermore, the whole community should be encouraged to use the re-structured panyards in an effort to foster a

better understanding and appreciation of the steelband.

Representatives see the need for a National body to represent all panmen in the country is of the greatest importance.

The National body should be broken up into regional organisations, which would reduce the work-load at the national level and utilise all available skills.

The steelband is associated too much with Carnival and Calypso. Fortunes rise with the advent of Carnival and recede with the passing of Carnival.

ON THE RADIO

Boys Town suggests that radio stations could expose more fully the range of the steelband repertoire. The greater use of non-calypso performances during the off-Carnival season, would go a long way towards appreciation of the musical ability and versatility of the steelbandman, the Paper stresses.

Under-exposure of small steelbands has been criticised. Radio stations and sponsors could help to erase this shortcoming. Persons concerned with the promotion of the steelband should make a con-

scious effort to discover and put on tape the lesser-known and unknown bands.

The vast majority of panmen still cannot read music, despite the high standard of performances achieved at festivals in Trinidad and Tobago and abroad.

Victor Peschier, in a Paper for Colgate Melodians steelband, maintains that qualified musicians in the country are not too involved with the steelband. He suggests a training programme for steelbandmen in the basic theory and rudiments of music.

Boys Town has proposed the setting-up of regional training centres, staffed by teachers grounded in music and who have teaching techniques.

Classes could be held in the morning and early evening to avoid clashes with practice sessions.

Boys Town is also urging standardisation of pan-tuning, with the employment of top tuners by Government. These tuners should be available to all steelbands.

Mr. Kenneth Edwards, Public Relations Officer of W.A.S.A. Silvertones steelband, recommends standardisation of responsibilities of steelbands and their sponsors and their relations to each other and the general public.