

Veteran panman hits 'handout mentality'

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By PETER RAY BLOOD

PAN TRINBAGO president, Patrick Arnold, came in for criticism on Thursday from steelband veteran, Patrick Thomas.

Resident in the United States for the past 29 years, Thomas said that he was appalled by Arnold's statements, reported in Thursday's newspapers, over the possibility of the Panorama competition not being held

in 2000.

The founder of Laven-tille's now defunct Thomas and Charles Football League, and co-founder of Success Village's Chase Manhattan Savoy's Steel Orchestra, Thomas said that today's steelband administrators were a spoilt lot, resigned to perpetuating the "handout mentality."

Thomas said: "Back in the old days, we worked vol-

untarily for the steelband movement. These guys now get paid and are griping.

"What kind of nonsense talk is this about 'no money, no Panorama.' Moreso, at the turn of the new millennium.

"It's hard to believe that Pan Trinbago has run so many shows over the past 10 years and have no money to show for it. When the late George Goddard and that executive ran our first

steelband festival in Queen's Hall, we did so on our own steam. Today's Pan Trinbago has too many people who don't really have the progress of both instrument and panman at heart."

Thomas said that Pan Trinbago has failed in truly lifting the pannist and national instrument to the heights they should have been by now. He explained: "Pan Trinbago should have some kind of retirement fund

for those guys who contributed with their blood, their sweat, and some, their lives for pan.

"Right now, Herman 'Rock' Johnson, of BWIA Sunjets, is in Florida and he is not well. A talented man like Kenny Hart died, and what did Pan Trinbago do to help him? There are so many... Men like 'Bassman' from San Juan All Stars and North Stars' Anthony Williams, who should all be

beneficiaries of such a scheme."

Thomas, who resides in Queens, New York, said that he was in the process of making a gadget to assist in the sinking of pans. He said: "With what I am inventing, you would be able to eliminate grooving and marking when a pan is sunk. Basically, it's like a jig, which will create its own grooves.

Thomas returns to New York on Sunday.