

Bid to put pan music on school curriculum

NEWLY-ELECTED executive of Pan Trinbago is to ask Government for a subvention to assist with development programmes it intends to undertake within the next twelve months.

Mr. Bertie Fraser, who was elected President of the steelband body at a convention on Sunday, October 20, said that his executive was working "round the clock" to draw up proposals to be put to Government next week.

He was speaking to newsmen at the Carnival Development Committees Queen Street Office, Port-of-Spain, on Wednesday night.

Mr. Fraser, leader of the L. J. Williams Nu Tones, said he had no idea what the figure would be "but whatever we ask for, I am sure it will be a very very conservative figure."

He added that the steelband movement was "getting along on very little" for a long time now.

The pan body also intends to take up with the Ministry of Education the question of making steelband music an indigenous part of the school curriculum.

Mr. Fraser, 29, an anthropologist with the National Cultural Council, said that Pan Trinbago planned to educate school children in the steelband as a respectable part of local culture.

It also hoped to teach music in schools, mainly the junior secondary schools, through the use of steelband instruments.

Pan Trinbago was also planning to encourage and maintain steelbands in teachers' colleges with teachers in-training as members.

Teachers would be asked to assist in compiling a history of the steelband.

Music Teachers and steelband arrangers would work out a curriculum for teaching the history of steelband music, as a regular subject in junior secondary schools. Pan men would be trained to become teaching assistants.

GETTING TIME OFF

Mr. Fraser said there was the problem of getting time off for members of the executive. In the past, there was no need for an extensive system of administration, but the new executive created this need and "we will be faced with this problem of time off for officers."

Mr. Fraser added that Pan Trinbago intended to have several of its officers employed or seconded where necessary to the organisation to do its administration.

"This is very necessary in view of the workload we will have to carry during the next twelve months," he said.

Pan Trinbago would employ nine full-time officers, plus additional supporting staff — clerks, typists and office assistants.

The President said the organisation would tender for small contracts such as the maintaining of grounds around Government buildings.

This would be an effort to create as many jobs as possible for the 13,000 members of the steelband body.

So far, 30 steelbandsmen have been assured part-time employment during the Carnival season and one has secured full employment with a private firm as a result of efforts by the new executive.