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Talks on for steelbands to tour US

SAN FERNANDO:

BECAUSE of the tremendous impact by Catelli All Stars steelband last year "it is likely that not one band but a number of bands will go on tour of the United States either late this year or early in 1975."

So said Mr. Errol Mahabir, Minister of Industry and Commerce on Saturday night at the PSA Centre, Paradise Pasture.

Occasion was the success function organised by Maritime Life Hatters' steelband which placed second in the National Steelband Panorama at the Dimanche Gras show on Carnival Sunday night.

Mr. Mahabir, who joined San Fernando's Mayor George Durity, Mr. Mervyn De Souza, General Manager of Maritime Life Insurance Company and Mr. Roy Augustus, President of Pan Trinbago, in congratulating Hatters on the "extremely high quality" of their performance in 1974 and more especially their success in the National Steelband Panorama said that at present negotiations were underway for the contract for a number of bands to tour the United States and to take part, possibly in the annual festival held in Texas.

UPWARD MOVEMENT

Mr. Mahabir said that the world had begun to recognise the tremendous value of steelband music. He instanced that when the American people heard their own National Anthem being played by Catelli All Stars they were so amazed that long before the anthem was finished they broke out in thunderous applause.

He said he was pleased to have had some association with Hatters and, especially, to have been responsible to secure sponsorship for them with Maritime Life Insurance Company as he had done for a number of other steelbands in San Fernando.

There was a great upward movement among steelbands, Mr. Mahabir added and he was positive that like him all San Fernando was pleased to see Hatters in the vanguard of such ascendancy.

Opportunity was taken by Hatters to pay tribute to their pioneers and to express thanks to their sponsors and to the Seerattan family upon whose lands their panyard is established; Mr. Leslie Young, Mr. Hezekiah Panchorie, Mr. Joe Bancharan, and family, Mr. Charles Pierre, Mr. Carl

Mohan, CEO, St. Patrick, Mr. Palm Sirjusingh, Mr. Gerald Chadee, Mrs. Janet Sylvestre, Mr. Edwin Rahaman, Mr. Ragoo Gosine (Welder), Mr. Bernard Kellman and Mr. Lloyd Gay (tuners), for their services to the band.

Special tribute was paid to Mr. Steve Achaibar, Captain and Arranger and Mr. Carlton Chadee, Manager, for their efforts to keep Hatters not only among the leading steel orchestras of the South but as the runner-up in the national contest.

SOUTH PROUD

Mr. Mahabir said Hatters were extremely fortunate to have Mr. Achaibar, a first class arranger, a dedicated person with a disciplined mind as their Captain and as well the unassuming efficient Manager, Mr. Carlton Chadee.

Mayor George Durity, Chairman of the San Fernando CDC, said Hatters by their performances at the National Steelband Panorama had made all San Fernandians proud of them. He regretted that they had not actually made the top spot but felt certain that they would make it in 1975.

"It is a great thing," Mr. Durity added, "to be the Mayor of a town which has been able to produce the bands winning the second and third places in the Steelband Panorama, and I do want on behalf of the people of San Fernando to congratulate all members of Maritime Life Hatters and thank all those who had anything to do with the band's success."

There was never a moment of regret in the sponsorship of Hatters, Mr. Mervyn De Souza, General Manager of Maritime Life told the audience.

He spoke in glowing terms of the courtesy, understanding and exemplary behaviour of the band and his company was extremely proud of its association with Hatters, a relationship which he hoped would continue to flourish in the years ahead.