

SPECIAL COURSES FOR TRAINING PLANNED

A BIG BOOST FOR OUR PANMEN

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A WEALTH of opportunities never before available has been opened up for steelbandmen following decisions by Cabinet yesterday.

They include, for the first time, permanent employment with government of two of the top local pan tuners.

- A residential course in Business Administration for steelbandmen.
- Special courses to train steelbandmen in music.
- Creation of employment opportunities for steelbandmen.

Cabinet's decisions follow recommendations at the National Consultation on Steelbands held last week at the Chaguaramas Convention Centre.

Concerning government employment of two pan tuners Cabinet said their assignment would be:

- To assist the University of the West Indies (whose Faculty of Engineering submitted a paper on the role of the research programme in the development of a steelband industry) in the Research Programme and the IDC with the feasibility study of the proposed pan factory.

- To conduct training courses for would-be tuners.

- To form part of the technical staff of the proposed factory.

Names of the two tuners with whom negotiations are to be opened were not given. But it was pointed out that the tuners jobs were to be based on the report of a committee set up at the consultation.

The residential course in business administration

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— each five long — will be held at the Chaguaramas Training Centre with Tembladora as the residential area.

Each course would be limited to 30 active steelbandmen selected on the following:

Sector

- Three participants nominated by the Executive of Pan Trinidad and Tobago.

- Two participants nominated by the Tobago Executive.

- Five participants nominated by the five regional areas; north, south, east and central

Trinidad and Tobago.

- Proposed starting date for the first course is April 2. Others would begin in July, August and October.

- Participants from the public sector would be granted special leave with pay and employers in the private sector would be asked to grant the same facility, Cabinet said.

Concerning music training for steelbandmen Cabinet revealed that a Committee had been set up to consider:

- The question of curricula and Syllabus.

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- Identification of appropriate non-residential centres for the holding of courses in the five regional areas.

- Equipment required for conduct of the courses.

On employment opportunities; an immediate survey is to be conducted by Government in collaboration with Pan Trinbago to determine the number of people in the steelband movement.

Suitable

Preparatory work, it was disclosed, had been started in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

A questionnaire is to be circulated to each band and "suitable" steelbandmen are to be employed by government in special areas to move around to help bands with the questionnaire.

Pan Trinbago it was also disclosed, had held a meeting with the Co-operative division of the Ministry on the formation of a steelbandmen's co-operative to undertake activities for the development of the steelband and in other types of "legitimate commercial and social activities."

Attention

In this they will make "full use of government's co-operative incentives.

The Ministry has been promised by sponsors "special attention" to members of bands they sponsor in the provision of employment and training opportunities.

The Chamber of Commerce, it was stated, had promised to consider this matter and take appropriate action.

A Standing Committee of representatives from several government ministries and Pan Trinbago has been set up to continue discussions.