

PM TELLS PAN TRINBAGO:

Accountability first, money after

By SAMPSON NANTON

IN THE midst of contention between Pan Trinbago and the Ministry of Culture over funds, Prime Minister Basdeo Panday has told the panbody that it would get no money unless it can provide proper accounts to the Government.

But soon after, he urged Minister Daphne Phillips to arrange a culture symposium before this year ends to ensure that pan resumes its rightful place in Carnival.

Addressing the launch of the Carnival Institute at the Paddock in the Queen's Park Savannah on Friday night, Panday first said that he was proud that against all prophecies of disaster, Pan Trinbago, the

Trinbago Unified Calypsonians Organisation (TUCO) and the National Carnival Bands Association (NCBA) were successfully transformed from State control to "management by the people".

But he said an exception might be seen in the perennial issue of the release of funds from the Ministry of Culture, a matter that is currently the subject of ongoing dialogue between the Ministry and Pan Trinbago.

"In this context, there will always be the consideration of accountability wherever public funds are disbursed," the Prime Minister said.

"There will be no disbursement of public funds without accountability. I will be failing in my duty if I did otherwise."

Panday said that the country had failed, to date, to recognise or to optimise the economic potential of either Mas, Pan or Calypso.

"We dare not enter the new millennium without a purposeful vision of how we will take our indigenous and unique creations to full potential," he told his audience of calypsonians, masmen, panmen and Ministry officials.

He also called on the newly formed Carnival Institute, headed by Dr Hollis "The Mighty Chalkdust" Liverpool, to develop a comprehensive Carnival Arts Programme for integration into the nation's schools syllabus.