

ML 1040

Panmen against holding finals in South

Rohandra John

rohjohn@trinidadexpress.com

PAN TRINBAGO band members are saying they want Panorama to remain at the Queen's Park Savannah in Port of Spain, next year.

Band members, during an emergency meeting yesterday at the Grand Stand to discuss plans for Panorama 2007, said there should be no Panorama if it is not held at the Savannah.

They also criticised Culture Minister Joan Yuille-Williams for staying silent on the issue.

They said it was time for the Government to give them a firm statement on where the Panorama competition will be held next year.

They also wanted to know if it was a "done deal" that Panorama semi-finals would be held at the western side of the Savannah and the finals at Skinner Park, as was proposed by Pan Trinbago president Patrick Arnold.

"I am looking at the Grand Stand now and not a bolt is removed. It is still intact," said Roustan Job, public relations officer of the BirdSong Steel Orchestra.

"It is still standing strong and I am wondering whether in fact they will start demolishing the structure before or immediately after Carnival. My band strongly feels that the reason for not holding Panorama here in the Savannah, where it has been held for so many years, is not solid enough. We see no reason why we should move to Skinner Park," he said to applause from other band members.

Job also contended that the "cost of constructing a facility in Skinner Park to host the show would be a lot more than if we were to host it here at the Savannah. It could run into millions (of dollars)".

Yet another Pan Trinbago member, Nestor Sullivan of Pamberi Steel Orchestra, said the powers that be were "playing politics. Is a wicked piece of politics that is being played here that is why they want the show to be held down South".

However, Pan Trinbago president Arnold told band members that the Government had indicated that it was tearing down the Grand Stand and there was no guarantee that it would be still standing come Carnival 2007.

He also maintained the only option "at this point" was to host the semi-finals at the western end of the Savannah and the finals at the Skinner Park, pointing out that the Government was willing to foot the cost of transportation and other expenses which would be incurred by the bands if they had to travel to south Trinidad.