

Panmen have given \$400,000 to set up pan factory

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

THE EDITOR:

Whilst we found that many of her comments were out of context and irresponsible none-the-less Pan Trinbago intends to take the Minister of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs at her word.

Minister Gordon made the point, at Pan Trinbago's Panorama Prize giving ceremony, that now was not a time for "ole talk and gamboge". She said that the steelband movement should make up their minds how money was to be spent.

The goodly Minister went so far as to question Pan Trinbago's sincerity as far as the interest of the steelband movement was concerned, and went to great lengths to point out the vast amount of money that government was ploughing into the movement.

No sooner had the Press reports on the Minister's statements become public, that a certain evening newspaper the epitome of objective and impartial journalism — felt constrained to chastise the movement for "relying too heavily" on outside sources of funding and counselling.

This evening newspaper lamented that the "emasculated" Pan Trinbago had "languished" the idea of a pan factory and a steelband theatre.

They were confident that the "directionless steelband movement", which had "deteriorated" to the status of a "two day concert phenomenon", could by conducting proper analysis effectively solve the problems of the steelbands' loss of its place in Carnival.

"The Pan Theatre ought to open any night now if the organisers are

serious" states the same evening newspaper editorial, as if they had not done enough to expose their naive and simplistic solutions that would have done a foreigner from Sweden or Greenland proud.

The point is that neither the statements attributed to Minister Gordon nor the evening newspaper's paranoid ramblings have any basis in fact.

Therefore Pan Trinbago as a responsible Organisation would like to present the facts of the situation for the public to judge, without descending to the level of character assassination and ridicule which has characterized response from so called responsible quarters.

"OLE TALK AND GAMBOGE"

The major theme of Pan Trinbago's 1982 biannual convention was the establishment of a capital base for the organisation:

"Over the past two years, therefore, we can claim to have learnt a most important lesson." "The lesson is that the time has long since passed for the Steelband Movement to put its destiny in the

hands of others, so that in order to make a step forward we have to depend on the input (mainly financial) of some third party."

"The time has reached for us to take up the challenge of leadership ourselves and to strive to develop our resources to their fullest potential" — Quotation from the convention documents 1982 biannual convention.

STEELBAND HEADQUARTERS

PAN TRINBAGO is contending that the history of the movement, prior to and following the 1982 convention, has effectively demonstrated the above mentioned theme of self-reliance.

Pan Trinbago has not only talked about its long cherished "dream" of a National Steelband Headquarters, more than that, the organisation has begun a building fund, with a personal input of \$150,000, the proceeds of "Pan is Beautiful one and two". In the above context we should acknowledge the role of the Kirpalanis Group of Companies in making such a surplus possible.

Government meanwhile has com-

mitted itself in principle to provide a parcel of state land for the headquarters.

Pan Trinbago has responded to that offer by making a survey of some six prospective sites together with architect Colin Laird.

That was two years ago since that time no substantial progress has been made towards identifying a suitable parcel of state lands.

NATIONAL PAN FACTORY

AGAIN Pan Trinbago is contending that not only has the organisation talked about the Pan Factory but more than that we have taken the lead in making that factory a reality.

Perhaps it is fashionable now to boast about the Cabinet decision to approve Phase 1 of a pan factory proposal.

But the memory of the steelband movement goes back to well beyond this recent bout of euphoria, to the decisions of the 1973 consultation on pan convened by the late Dr. Eric Williams.

We remember the numerous surveys and abortive initiatives commissioned by the I.D.C. We remember more recently the abrupt termination of a joint venture with the National Energy Corporation.

In fact past prior to the Cabinet decision to commission Phase 1 of the project Pan Trinbago had acquainted Minister Gordon with Pan Trinbago's intention to commission a pan factory as a private venture.

More than that in 1983 and 1984 panmen have contributed \$400,000 from their Panorama pay packets to back the call for a National Pan Factory.

In fact Pan Trinbago had to subsidise by some \$8,000 the amount that Cabinet had voted for Phase 1 of the Pan Factory Project which amounted to just over \$50,000 and which was inadequate to cover Phase 1 of the project.

In 1984 also the steelband movement assisted the Government's contribution to this capital project even further by foregoing any increases in Panorama prize monies and appearance fees, thereby freeing up scarce resources which we believe could be better spent on capital projects.

PAN IN SCHOOLS

Pan Trinbago has not only lamented the fact that after 20 years of independence the steelband has not found an official place in our nation's schools, in 1984 Pan Trinbago organised and funded entirely on its own, the inaugural School Steelband Music Festival, the forerunner to the vastly successful 1983 version co-sponsored by Textel and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

Pan Trinbago also commissioned a tuners convention in 1981 which agreed upon a standardised range of pans for all school steelbands, while member bands of the organisation have provided instruments and tutors and assisted in the formation and organisation of a number of school steelbands.

ANNUAL PROGRAMME

Pan Trinbago's annual programme includes a number of cultural events of major national significance and importance. Excluding Panorama which is funded by the Carnival Development Committee.

Pan Trinbago is responsible for "Camps in Concert" which in its short existence is already challenging for the position of the major carnival production, the Steelband Music Festival one of the premier cultural events in our nation's cultural alendar, and the school's versio of this festival which unearthe such an explosion of talent that it may soon rival the Festival for conventional bands.

In addition Pan Trinbago has produced a major steelband historical epic in the production "Pan Through the Eyes of the Calypsonian".

Apart from these major activities the organisation hosts a number of regional pan jamborees throughout the year as well as providing special concerts for the Tourist Board Cruise Ship arrivals entertainment programme.

NATIONAL SEMINARS AND SYMPOSIUMS

Pan Trinbago was one of the few cultural organisations to accept the Prime Minister's invitation to present a position paper at the National Consultation on Productivity convened sometime ago.

And once again our organisation was again one of the few who submitted a position paper to the recent Symposium on Intellectual Property.

So much for Pan Trinbago's penchant for "ole talk and gamboge" perhaps the truth that the shoe is on the other foot.

FROM PA TRINBAGO