

20% HIKE IN PANORAMA \$\$

By KEITH SMITH

PAN Trinbago has "reluctantly" accepted a 20 per cent increase in Panorama prize money from government.

Pan Trinbago had originally asked for a 35 per cent increase over last year's prizes to which government countered with an initial 12 per cent offer.

The 20 per cent offer was finally made after a meeting with Pan Trinbago officers with a committee from the Ministry of Finance headed by Permanent Secretary, Frank Barsotti.

Yesterday, however, Pan Trinbago's president Arnim Smith, cited as the reason for

Pan Trinbago's dissatisfaction the arbitrary manner in which government arrived at its 20 per cent offer.

He explained that Pan Trinbago had argued strongly before the "Barsotti" committee that their 35 per cent increase was justified "in light of the fact that because of inflation the cost of producing a steelband was more than 77 per cent over last year's..."

"Everybody in that committee agreed with our arguments, to the extent that they expressed surprise that we had only asked for 35 per cent, but behind our backs they have come up with this 20 per cent offer.

Mr. Smith said that his organisation had restricted their request to 35 per cent in the interests of the government and the tax-payer.

He further contended that "up to now nobody can tell us how government arrived at the first 12 per cent offer or the final 20 per cent offer."

Nevertheless, the executive of Pan Trinbago had prevailed on the steelband body to accept the 20 per cent offer because of the organisation's commitment to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

"We did not think," he said, "we would have been justified in holding the public to ransom one year after the boycott and after the struggle to get the Jean Pierre Complex as the site for the Steelband Festival — both issues on which we got tremendous public support."

With the 20 per cent increase, the prizes for

the National Panorama Championship will be as follows:

1st — \$23,760; 2nd — \$19,008; 3rd — \$15,840; 4th — \$11,088; 5th — \$7,920; 6th — \$6,336; 7th — \$4,752; 8th — \$3,960; 9th — \$3,168; 10th — \$2,376; 11th — \$1,446; 12th — \$1,440.

The prizes for the zonal Panorammas are: 1st — \$6,336; 2nd — \$5,544; 3rd — \$4,752; 4th — \$2,880; 5th — \$1,440; 6th — \$1,080; 7th — \$729; 8th — \$720.

The "pan around neck" prizes are: 1st — \$3,168; 2nd — \$2,376; 3rd — \$1,720; 4th — \$1,296; 5th — \$432; 6th — \$432.

Appearances fees for the national and zonal preliminaries are: (conventional steelbands) \$6,720 and for pan around neck bands \$2,712.

TOBAGO PRELIMS

THE DRAW for the Tobago Panorama preliminaries will be held on Saturday at the Carnival Development Committee (CDC) office, Scarborough, at 10 a.m.

In all, some 65 conventional bands have registered for the Tobago Panorama with 12-pan-round-the-neck bands.

The National finals will be held on February 28, at the Queen's Park Savannah, Port of Spain.

PSA meets CPO

THE Public Services Association (PSA) met the Chief Personnel Officer yesterday to discuss proposals made in the draft amendment of the Education Act, according to a PSA executive member. Up to press time, no details were available.

Meanwhile, the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association (TTUTA) announced last night that it would meet the CPO today at 5 p.m.

TTUTA also issued a call for support for a vigil to be held outside the CPO's office, Abercromby Street, Port of Spain, during the meeting.

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