

# Phillips: National support needed for Steelband Festival

By JEFF HACKETT *ML1040*

CULTURE Minister Dr Daphne Phillips has called for national support for next month's World Steelband Festival.

Senator Phillips told the Senate, during the budget debate on Tuesday, that the festival could not be successful without the support of the Government, Pan Trinbago and the national community, and pointed out that the Government had allocated \$1 million towards it.

"We cannot afford to use the World Steelband Festival for political points," she stressed.

Phillips denied that the Ministry had tried to hijack the Festival, pointing out that the Ministry's logo was used to promote the Festival at the official launch several months ago.

Regarding a chrome factory that was up for sale, the Minister said it was "totally untrue" to say that the factory had gone to Grenada.

Phillips said, currently, a consultant was in the process of looking at the factory and comparing it with the acquisition of a new factory.

The Minister noted that \$11.5 million was allocated for Carnival in 1995 and pointed out that the 2000/2001 Budget allocated \$19 million, in addition to subventions.

The subvention for Pan Trinbago was \$320,000, in comparison to \$211,000 in 1995, and \$50,000 for TUCO, which did not have an annual subvention before.

Phillips said the Carnival Institute was established and was



**DR DAPHNE PHILLIPS**

situated at 18 Victoria Avenue, while the National Steel Orchestra had its own accommodation in a brand-new building on Nelson Street, Port of Spain, and had a subvention of \$2 million for the financial year 2000/2001.

Also contributing to the budget debate was Tobago Senator Winston John, who defended embattled Tobago House of Assembly (THA) Chief Secretary Hochoy Charles.

"If my leader in Tobago made a mistake, nobody must condemn him," said John.

He said there was a "mindset" about Tobago and "that mindset is that Trinidad does not care".

John appealed for the country to come together to deal in an amicable way with the relationship between Trinidad and Tobago.

And John called for three ferries, one devoted to cargo, and he felt with three ferries there would be no strain on the system.