

Black doctor a jolly tonic for the GLC

By VALERIE JENKINS

IT PROMISES to be a jolly, lively year for the GLC's image under its newly-elected first black chairman, Dr David Pitt.

Big, broad and beaming, he intends to make it a year when London is firmly established in her role as centre of the Commonwealth.

One innovation will be at the GLC annual reception. Traditionally a formal and not too rumbustious affair, held last year in the Festival Hall, it will move back to County Hall and there will definitely be, promises Dr Pitt, a Trinidadian steel band providing the music.

And he expects that as public figurehead for London, he will be visiting several Commonwealth countries and entertaining all the High Commissioners and any Commonwealth Ministers who are over here.

Dr Pitt was born in Grenada 60 years ago. His 83-year-old mother still lives there, but Dr Pitt was unable to be there for the Independence celebration because he was too busy working on the GLC budget.

Laughing

He came to Britain in 1932 to study medicine at Edinburgh, and plunged straight into politics, being "President of almost everything at the University."

When he qualified he went back to the West Indies and met his wife Dorothy in Trinidad.

She is a charming, laughing woman, with a part-Spanish, part-Scottish ancestry, who loves entertaining informally.

A Camden councillor who is a close friend says that when the Pitts lived in Willesden they

had a full open-house every Sunday, to which visiting colonial leaders made a beeline.

A picture on the piano at their present home in Hampstead shows Dr Nkrumah clasping Dr Pitt in greeting, and he was invited to attend all the colonial Independence celebrations.

"Most of the Heads of State had been my patients in London, of course," he says.

Since 1949, he has practised as a GP in North Gower Street.

"I had come here to negotiate a new constitution for Trinidad with the post-war Labour government. I was annoyed at the constitution that was decided upon, so I settled in London instead and brought my wife and children over here."

Handsome

The Pitts have three handsome children—a son who is a barrister, one daughter a doctor, and another a trainee teacher.

Ever since he arrived here he has had a career of being the First Black Something at regular intervals.

"I was the first black councillor in 1961, and the sad thing is that I am still the only black one at County Hall," he says.

"I'm hoping that my year as chairman will stimulate other black people to stand for the GLC."

In 1966 he became London's first black JP.

During his year as chairman, he says, he intends to give a prominent place to publicising the work of the Community Relations Commission, of which he is deputy chairman. He is a former chairman of CARD (Campaign Against Racial Discrimination).



DR DAVID PITT, new GLC chairman, and his wife Dorothy at their Hampstead home today.