

'LEYTON' IS OUT — ORIENT FC IS NEW TITLE OF CLUB FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL

A NEW club title and a new leader have emerged from the financial fix into which Leyton Orient has been slipping since its brief glory-spell in the First Division.

The new club is Orient FC, a name which requires Board of Trade confirmation. The new leader is self-appointed saviour Mr. Arthur Page, the long-serving director who is now ready to be elected Club chairman.

Why the new name? Because Leyton is today nothing more than a postal region, the old borough having been swallowed up by Waltham Forest.

Why is Mr. Page ready to take up the reins of a club struggling for survival? "In view of the warm response I have received to my appeal I am now prepared to take over the chair of this club," he told shareholders at Thursday's annual meeting in Leyton Municipal Offices.

Since the previous Sunday's emergency meeting in the football club stand Mr. Page had received donations exceeding £2,000. Someone at the annual meeting had offered a "no



MR. ARTHUR PAGE (13)

strings attached" £5,000—"and he doesn't want a seat in the directors' box but will continue to watch the home matches from behind the goal," said Mr. Page.

The accounts presented to Thursday's meeting summed up the dismal financial picture of the Orient. Last season's working loss of £18,249 might have been much more, but for the £16,862 raised by the pool scheme. At the year's end the Club's debt to banks topped £70,000. Other liabilities amounted to £48,815.

Because the present chairman Mr. Harry Zosman was delayed by fog on his flight

The price of a bright future—£50,000

return from Ireland Mr. Page took the chair. Later at the meeting Mr. Page was re-elected a director, to an ovation louder than the League side usually gets.

First business was the re-naming of the club Orient F.C. The proposition, in the names of Mr. Page and club vice-chairman Mr. Frank Harris, was carried by 69 votes to three.

In a stirring speech which set the optimistic atmosphere for a meeting which seemed doomed to despair, Mr. Page put the club's financial cards on the table. He spoke of the substantial working loss on last season.

"The year was a sorry one as our results indicate," said Mr. Page. "There is no sense in recriminations and the Board must take responsibility for our lack of success."

A year ago, revealed Mr. Page, he wrote to the chairman asking for a special board meeting to discuss the club's sorry plight. But nothing was

done, and the worsening situation was allowed to drift on.

Mr. Page described how he took matters into his own hands and approached Dick Graham, confident that he was the one manager with strength of purpose to revive the club's fortunes. Dick Graham accepted the challenge and joined the Orient administrative team.

Mr. Page pointed out that because of falling attendances this season the directors had been obliged to dip into their own pockets each week to pay the club wages.

"I said that the club needs £30,000 to meet its immediate commitments and to tide us over the rest of this season," said Mr. Page. "We have raised something in the region of £2,000."

Mr. Page renewed his Sunday morning assurance that any donations to the club would be used to meet the immediate problems and not

be set off against long-term debts.

"If misfortune overtook this club those who have given money will get it back," said Mr. Page.

"I am hoping that, within the next few months, we will raise something of the order of £50,000, and if we can do that the club has a bright future," said Mr. Page, who later declared that he hoped to achieve this target by the end of the year.

Looking back, Mr. Page admitted: "We should never have gone into the First Division and I hope that next time we get into the First Division we will have a team and a board to back them up."

The suggested amalgamation of Leyton Orient and Romford F.C. was ruled out by Mr. Page, who described it as "newspaper talk".

"We, as a board, feel we have a duty to the best core of 5,000 supporters and I would hate to let them down by taking the team away from this part of the world."

Cup replay

Leyton Orient 2, Fulham 2
by Tony Stafford

WHY Leyton Orient are struggling at the foot of the Third Division cannot be explained from their performance in the London Challenge Cup.

In Monday's semi-final, after an abysmal start, they pulled back two goals and at the end were showing more thrust and power than an experienced, albeit a reserve, Fulham side.

Six of Dick Graham's first team men were on show but, until the goal really cut up after heavy rain, Fulham showed more speed and craft.

Fulham soon struck twice in as many minutes. First, inside left Ryan scored a simple goal when he was left unmarked; then Pentecost added a second with an excellent solo effort.

After the interval Orient came out to brighten the Leyton gloom. Price ran and ran and nearly helped Whitehouse score. After a pedestrian first half Whitehouse now got to grips with his game.

Being the perpetual underdogs has done much for Brisbane-road fans. Any example of good football is acclaimed with a real local pride so O'Brien's goal produced as much noise as any cold, wet crowd of 7,000 could be expected to make.

Only 15 minutes remained when Whitehouse headed home a Meitchik corner and from that point the crowd roared without really expecting any more goals. Holton had already missed a penalty — Maceo saving well—so Orient resigned themselves to a Craven Cottage replay on Monday.



Orient Manager Dick Graham addresses supporters during the meeting. (P.A.I.)