

£1,500 settled it

GRAHAM: WHY I QUIT

DICK GRAHAM, Orient's manager and keenest fan, walked out on a five-year contract yesterday for the sake of a principle and £1,500.

The money would have been the down-payment on two players Graham insisted he must have to supplement a shoe-string staff and keep fielding a Third Division side.

"The money was refused me," Graham told me last night. "And I

By STEVE CURRY

disciplinarian and disciple of honesty, resigned—leaving behind a dressing-room of players pleading with him to carry on.

He has no job to go to. Two weeks ago he turned down the offer of a two-year contract with American club Los Angeles as adviser and coach. He may now reconsider making a career in the States.

Furious

Arthur Page, chairman of Orient, the club with £100,000 debts, was furious. He told me:

intended to resign. I told him to wait until today when I could call a directors' meeting before saying anything.

Instead he went straight in and told his players. When I arrived at the ground this morning there he was addressing the players like a sheik and his harem.

He's been given complete freedom. We haven't interfered in anything he's done. Some of his team decisions have been odd. Nothing said. And this is the thanks we get.

It has been a bolt out of the blue. Until we have time to collect ourselves we can say nothing about a successor. For the time being our trainer, Peter Angell, takes over.

The Orient vacancy is not likely to bring a flood of applications. It is a desperate club that doesn't even own as little accommodation to offer as nothing in the kitty.

ex-West Bromwich trainer-coach and Palace manager, who joined Orient in June 1966, talked last night of the "heavy burden of managing Orient." He said:—

"I have been dying of frustration. The club has been relying on me to work miracles. Last Saturday I was down to 11 fit players for the game against Watford.

Nobody can accuse me of not trying. I have worked on the pitch, filled the skips, and even helped in the club bar. Any thing to keep down costs.

Shortage

Recently I even considered putting the mortgage down on a house for a player out of my own pocket, because there is such a shortage of club property.

On the playing side I have drained every last ounce out of the players, driven them hard.

I have had to throw teenage players into the League side before they were ready, something completely against a professional instinct.

It has caused me more worry than I can take and I have been lying awake at night pondering the club's problems.

I only hope my resignation shakes the club into reality. They must buy before the March 16 deadline or face a serious threat of relegation.

The players' reaction to Graham's resignation was expressed by skipper Brian Wood: "We tried to persuade him to change his mind.

"He drove us hard and at times it was like Commando training. Sometimes we thought he didn't show much gratitude when things went well. But there was a lot of respect for him."

Page paid this tribute to Graham: "He has been a good manager and will be hard to replace. If he wanted to reconsider his decision we would listen."

HOW THEY CAME AN

DICK GRAHAM becomes manager of Orient since they won promotion in 1961-2. The sequence:—

August 1961: JOHNNY CAREY takes over. Orient promoted to Division I, relegated next season.

July 1963: Carey leaves to take over management of Nottingham Forest. LES GORE made acting manager.

November 1963: BENNY FENTON appointed manager.

December 1964: Fenton sacked. GORE made caretaker-manager.

January 1965: DAVE SEXTON appointed manager.

December 1965: Sexton resigns. GORE appointed caretaker-manager. Orient relegated to Division III at end of season.

June 1966: DICK GRAHAM appointed manager. Made general manager in January 1967 and given five-year contract in June.

February 1968: Graham resigns.



ARTHUR PAGE

