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Problem-Pressed Flood Seeks Haven in Europe

By MERRELL WHITTLESEY

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Still hopeful of a change of heart on the part of their wandering center fielder, the Senators plan to place Curt Flood on the disqualified list rather than the voluntary retired list so as not to lock him out for a 60-day period.

If Flood, somewhere in Europe, should decide that running is not the answer to his personal problems, he could be reinstated immediately from the disqualified list. The chances of Flood's return to baseball are believed to be remote, despite the Senators' light in the window.

Owner Bob Short has only a telegram and cancelled checks for 5½-months' salary to show for his gamble of enticing Flood back to the game he is suing for \$3½-million.

The wire, sent from Kennedy Airport before Flood departed on a Pan-American plane for Lisbon and Barcelona, read, "I tried. A year and a half is too much. Very severe personal problems are mounting every day. Thanks for your confidence and understanding."

As of press time, Short had not heard any more and Flood had been playing a no-comment game with members of the European press who dogged him.

Short has asked Arthur Goldberg, who is handling Flood's suit against baseball's reserve clause, and Marvin Miller, executive director of the Major League Baseball Players Association, to advise him if and when Flood contacts them.

Some Crank Calls

The Senators have received some calls that Flood has been seen in New York, Chicago and other places, but have put them in the crank call category.

Short was in town when Flood checked out of the Anthony House and left for New York a few hours before a game against the Twins. Flood was scheduled to play in this one because lefty Tom Hall was pitching for Minnesota.

Curt and his .200 batting average had sat out six starts in a row against righthanded pitching. He had been used twice as a pinch-hitter in the six games and contributed a game-tying single and was walked.

Short was shocked. Yet in thinking back, the Senators' owner said he had a vague suspicion that something might happen. Short said he had suggested bankruptcy to Flood.

Flood's new teammates of spring training and 18 games into the season were convinced that his slow start with the bat had little if anything to do with his fadeout. They were convinced that he spoke the truth in his wire when he mentioned his "mounting personal problems."

They were believed to be mostly financial, including alimony, although Flood was not close enough to anyone on the club to discuss his private affairs with them.

Expensive Performer

Vice-President Joe Burke put a stop to the guesswork about how much money Flood received when he said Flood's salary had started November 1, 1970, and he had been paid through April 15.

His salary was \$110,000 and he was one two-week payday short of receiving half of it, although he played in only 18 games. Short's word for it was "pre-paid."

Short said that he would not make any attempt to regain any of the salary.

Flood's decision obviously was not a spur of the moment thing. Two days before he left, he asked equipment manager Fred Baxter how much he owed him, and he paid in full. Baxter thought it was strange at the time, but when Flood showed up the next night, Baxter forgot it.

Mike Epstein, who spoke of Flood's departure as a "deep per-

sonal loss," said that Flood had told him the previous weekend while they were shagging balls in the outfield that "things are closing in on me."

Epstein said he tried to talk Flood out of doing anything serious. "I told him life was like baseball and we all went through slumps," Mike said.

Jim French, the Senators' player rep, said he thought Flood made a terrible mistake.

Come Back, Curt

"I would like to convey to him that not one of us holds anything against him for what he did and we will welcome him back," French said.

Like the others, French was positive that Flood's troubles were not baseball connected.

Ted Williams suspected that Flood's troubles were causing him sleepless nights.

"You could tell it in his eyes," the manager said. Williams spoke of Flood as a "big leaguer all the way" and said he personally was sorry to see him go.

Senators' Slants: Denny McLain did not brood over his ejection from a game against the Brewers. He pitched a shutout before he was



Notable Absentee: Curt Flood's Uniform No. 21 Hangs in Cubicle in Nat Dressing Room.

tossed out, and another in his next start after he was sent to the showers. In blanking the Twins, he said he was almost ready. Denny cannot wait to meet the Tigers. "They are my incentive," he said. . . . Paul Casanova was proud of his game-winning hit against the Twins

because he said Ron Perranoski was throwing either a spitter or a Vaseline ball. "We all knew it, the bench was yelling," Cazzie said. . . . The bullpen had six of the Senators' first 12 victories, two each to Darold Knowles and Joe Grzenda. . . . The Senators had

an early 5-1 record against lefties, in contrast to their 24-38 record against them last year. . . . The Senators had three shutouts in 20 games. They did not post a third shutout until the 91st game last year. . . . Tim Cullen has started to keep a book on pitchers.