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Two London Papers Oppose Nixon Critic as Envoy to U.S.

Washington Post Foreign Service

LONDON, Nov. 10—A debate has developed here on the wisdom of sending as British Ambassador to the United States a onetime radical journalist who has published harsh opinions about President-elect Nixon.

Two British papers, the Sunday Times and the Sunday Express, today urged the government to reconsider its appointment of John Freeman, who, as editor of the New Statesman, described Mr. Nixon in 1964 as a "discredited and outmoded" purveyor of the irrational or the inactive.

Freeman joined the Labor government in 1965 as Britain's High Commissioner to India, where by common agreement he did an outstanding job. He was appointed Ambassador last March, when it was still believed President Johnson would run again, and is to take up his duties early next year.

According to the Sunday Times, Freeman's appointment was not well received in Wash-

ington. The paper commented: "The fact that he had divested himself of his political past and had been an outstanding British High Commissioner in India was apparently overlooked in favor of the fact that he was, in American eyes, a marked man of the left."

"With a Republican in the White House," the editorial continued, "these apprehensions are likely to be redoubled, all the more so because Mr. Nixon is known to prefer dealing with professionals doing professional jobs."

Last week Freeman said he has revised his opinions and now believes Mr. Nixon has proved by his courage his fitness to hold high office. The Ambassador-designate re-

peated the same point in a BBC radio interview today.

The Sunday Times took favorable note of Freeman's new attitude but felt that the Labor government should put out discreet feelers to determine the outlook for his relations with the White House. If the result were negative, the paper said, then another job should be found for Freeman.

The right-wing Sunday Express said Freeman should withdraw gracefully from the post.

There has been no sign that either the government or Freeman will take this advice, but it is certain the issue will be debated in Parliament this week, where one Tory peer has said he will bring it up.