
Flap Over Nixon Visit to Ireland

LONDON — (UPI) — A surprised and angered Britain reacted sharply today to reports of a possible stopover in Ireland by President Nixon en route to Moscow next month.

In the absence of official confirmation, government circles remained silent, though evidently resentful. The reports were widely printed in London newspapers.

But diplomatic quarters left little doubt of their surprise at the notion that the U.S. President would choose to go to Ireland at this critical juncture of British involvement there.

There was no indication whether Britain will choose to make its uneasiness and

outright concern known in Washington. But unofficial and press comment was quick in terming the reported stopover an election maneuver aimed at the Irish vote in the United States.

They considered it a move apparently intended to counter the recent stance taken by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) on the Irish problem and his implicit criticism of Britain's policy.

Britain has considered Kennedy's criticism of its handling of the Irish conflict as damaging and outright anti-British, although the government in London avoided any formal statement.

Kennedy has called for the withdrawal of British troops in Northern Ireland.
