

Former FAA Chief

Ex-Official Says Nixon Told Ford to Fire Him

Washington

Former Federal Aviation Administrator Alexander P. Butterfield said yesterday that President Ford took office with a mandate to fire him.

Presidential press secretary Ron Nessen disagreed, however. He said suggestions that there had been any agreement by Mr. Ford to fire Butterfield are "just ludicrous."

Butterfield, who first revealed the existence of the White House taping system in congressional testimony, said that the decision that he should be fired was made by President Nixon after Butterfield testified before the House Judiciary Committee in July, 1974. The committee was considering articles of impeachment against Mr. Nixon.

And he said he believes, both from the way he was fired and from indications by his friends in the White House, that when Mr. Nixon left office there was an agreement that Butterfield would be dismissed.

Butterfield first commented on the possibility of such an agreement Sunday on CBS' "Sixty Minutes," and repeated his remarks yesterday to the Associated Press.

"I don't think it was such a big deal that Nixon talked to Ford about me," Butterfield said. But he added he believes an agreement was worked out by staffers serving

as liaison between the two men.

"It was like a mandate," he said, Butterfield added that he was convinced of this agreement when he was fired, because Mr. Ford refused to see him, although they know each other and at one time had been on a first name basis.

Also, he said, he was told ^(20 DEC 74) rather abruptly to leave, without the courtesy of remaining in office until a successor was named.

Asked why Butterfield was fired, Nessen said it was "to improve the administration of the Federal Aviation Administration. We said at the time there was a desire to improve the administration at FAA."

When asked why the administration failed to name a new head for the FAA for several months, Nessen said he had not checked into the matter.

Butterfield said that despite his failure to find another position since leaving FAA, he doesn't feel there is any conspiracy against him.

He noted he has been working as an independent consultant and lecturer while looking for a permanent administrative job.

He said he doesn't resent the fact he hasn't found a position, saying he understands that many firms are wary of people who have received a lot of publicity.

Mike Wallace, who interviewed



UPI Telephoto

ALEXANDER BUTTERFIELD
'It was like a mandate'

Butterfield for the "Sixty Minutes" program, said Butterfield has a pension of \$1400 a month, based on 27 years of federal service.

Associated Press