

Commissioner Burton fires back at the press, Nels Anderson

The Honorable Nels A. Anderson, Jr.

P.O. Box 234

Dillingham, Alaska 99576

Dear Representative Anderson:

Since you choose to continue to take my recent remarks out of context, and have now made a personal attack upon my integrity and intentions, I am compelled to respond to your most recent public letter to the Governor.

My expressed concern is a valid concern for law enforcement for all of Alaska; and particularly for the documented attempts, by known violent radical groups, to influence various portions of the Alaska population for their purposes. These attempts have not been limited to any one ethnic group, but have included groups such as the American Indian Movement, the SLA, and similar organizations whose avowed purpose is to commit violent acts to obtain their desired results through illegal methods.

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letters continued . . .

Burton fires back . . .

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I do not take my oath of office lightly, and in 23 years as a law enforcement officer in Alaska, this is the first incident in which I have been accused of being a racist. I would submit that I have not changed today from what I have been for the last 23 years. If I am, as you say, a racist to the degree that I should be dismissed from my job, I am surprised that this complaint has not arisen before now. If my actions ever become influenced by *any* special interest group I will resign rather than capitulate.

As a legislator and professional leader of Alaska, I think it would behoove you and other leaders to also share my concern and see that we work together to insure that outside forces, attempting to assert themselves, and seeking to take advantage of the current social pressures which many of our people in Alaska are under today, do not succeed. If you, or any other leader, fails to recognize the fact that not only some of the Alaska natives - but other segments of the population of Alaska - are under immense social pressure from one direction or another, and therefore highly vulnerable to being influenced by highly

skilled, dedicated radical groups, then I would submit that we are doing an injustice to the State and the people of Alaska.

Again, I will reiterate that I never said that the Alaska Natives were going to blow up the

pipeline - *that was the statement of the news media*. As you have read, I was concerned about the influence on *all* people of Alaska from the various pressure groups as I have mentioned above.

To coin a phrase, I do not like the statements that you have made either; however, I will defend your right to do so.

In closing, I would just like to make the observation that the

only mention of racism has come from you. I have never given any indication of race entering into any decisions or comments that I have made. I would be happy to discuss this with you - or anyone - at any time, personally, at your convenience when you are in Juneau or upon my next visit to Dillingham, (which remains one of my favorite places in Alaska since the days when I lived there).

Sincerely yours,
Richard L. Burton

Commissioner of
Public Safety