

Busing Opponent Praises Supporters

By DENTON L. WATSON

James O. Sullivan of Glastonbury, one of the leading opponents of the busing plan that was rejected by the town Thursday, said Friday successful efforts were directly related to the efforts of his supporters.

"I think the situation shows that when the people of a town are involved with an issue that strikes very close they can become involved, whereas ordinarily this would not have been so," he said.

What impressed him, he said, was that most of the people involved in the opposition were not ordinarily involved in town affairs, just as he isn't.

He praised the conduct of persons at the hearing, especially Robert Merritt, chairman of the Glastonbury Board of Education, who, he said, was fair.

The busing plan was voted down by the Board of Education in a three-to-three vote.

Due to lack of space Thursday some comments of persons opposing the busing proposal were cut from Friday morning's story. The opposition included:

A letter sent to the Board of Education by Sullivan this week outlining his organization's views on the plan.

"In the past weeks this town has been subjected to strong, almost unbelievable pressure from many quarters to adopt the busing plan," he said. These persons in "this mass attack" included civil rights and educational groups, religious organizations and the Chambers of Commerce, he said.

The real issue involved, he said, is neither education nor helping Negro children.

The issue, he said, is whether there should be regional control over local schools, and this is "being pushed" under the "Regional Desegregation Plan." He quoted Dr. Alexander J. Plante of the State Dept. of Education as telling local residents: "The goal, it seems to us, will be some sort of regional planning."

Dr. Plante, however, reached Friday night said, "That was an absolute distortion of the statement I made in Glastonbury." He said he told the group at the meeting he attended he "would be absolutely against a Regional Board of Education."

Sullivan said in the letter, "The question is do you want Glastonbury to run its own schools or do you want the state to run them?"

Sullivan introduced at the hearing a petition he said was signed by 1,919 residents who opposed the plan. And this, he said, "should be taken as a mandate to keep busing out of our town."

Questions Validity

The validity of this petition was, however, questioned by Douglas McDonald. He said that although his name was on the petition, he did not oppose the plan, but was strongly for it.

He was away from home when the petition was taken to his home, he said. And his wife had previously been out of the state for a number of weeks, he said. Also, the person with the petition, he said, told his family that 6,000 students from Hartford would be bused to Glaston-

bury, and children from Glastonbury would have been bused to Hartford.

Dorothy Rankl cited the shortage of classroom space in the town as one reason for her opposing the plan. The present and future needs of local children should first be considered, she said.

Also, she said, some of the children now bused to schools in Glastonbury have no opportunity to play after classes because they spend much time on buses. "What would happen to the children of Hartford, who wouldn't get home before dark, she asked.

She continued to say that local children who are slow needed extra attention in school and the energies of local teachers should be concentrated here, she implied. The money that would be used to transport children to Glastonbury, she said, could be used to build a new school in Hartford.