

Abplanalp Concern Drops Sullivan Airport Proposal

By RALPH BLUMENTHAL

The Precision Valve Corporation of Robert H. Abplanalp announced yesterday that it was withdrawing a proposal to take over the operation of the dormant Sullivan County International Airport.

The four-year-old airport is under investigation by a Federal grand jury looking into allegations of construction fraud. But the investigation is reliably reported to be in no way related to the operating proposal offered by Mr. Abplanalp.

The proposal drew fire from a few local critics last summer who obtained a draft of the proposed terms and found that they would commit the county to leasing the \$6-million airport to Mr. Abplanalp for \$55,000 a year until 1981 and for slightly more from 1981 until the year 2011.

In a letter received yesterday by the Sullivan County Board of Supervisors announcing the company's decision to withdraw its proposal, Joseph Pizzurro, Precision's executive vice president, indicated that the company was not satisfied with the community's degree of support.

The letter read, in part: "It has always been our concept that the hope of making this facility successful would be based primarily on the concerted efforts of all those interested parties in the community. It has become apparent to us that this concerted effort could not be coordinated."

The proposed contract,

which county officials said several times they were on the verge of signing, also called for the county to maintain the airport grounds and runways, expand certain facilities, build access roads to new facilities the operator would put up and, in the airport transactions, absolve the operator of the 6 per cent county sales tax or any other "charges, fees or tolls of any nature."

Vincent Carberry, director of advertising and public relations for the company, declined to explain the problem in more detail.

However, Milton Levine, chairman of the company's board of supervisors, said he believed the company did not get from the Catskill resort owners the financial guarantees it was seeking. These were reported to involve a guarantee of 28,000 passenger fares through the airport the first year, or \$250,000 worth of tickets, an amount the hotel owners would make up if passenger fares fell short of that figure.

One of the hotels that balked at the arrangement was the Concord, according to its president, Robert Parker.

Milton Kutscher, president of Kutscher's County Club and a strong backer of the proposal, called the outcome "a matter of great disappointment to me and a great blow to the county."

However, county officials have recently been approached by another potential operator,

a group composed of James E. Doherty Associates of New York City, investment counselor; Orlando Panfile, operator of air services at Teterboro, N. J.; Larry Leighton of Clark, Dodge & Co., and Leas, Kurzman & Duell, lawyers.