

Ontario Hansard March 22, 2007

Mr. Paul Ferreira (York South-Weston): To the Premier: Earlier this week, your Minister of the Environment said something rather curious in response to my question about the high-speed Blue 22 air-rail link between Union Station and Pearson airport. She mentioned that her ministry would discuss the draft terms of reference with GO Transit and her quote-"various proponents."

My constituents and I know one of those proponents, SNC-Lavalin, the same outfit that peddles bullets over Baghdad, that conducts toll highway robbery here in Ontario, and has been known to support the Liberal Party.

Premier, my question: For the benefit of my constituents-

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order. The government House leader will come to order. The Minister of Energy will come to order. The member for Timmins-James Bay will come to order. Order. Look, I'm having great difficulty hearing the member from York South-Weston place his question. Member?

Mr. Ferreira: Thank you, Speaker.

Premier, for the benefit of my constituents and those in ridings such as Davenport, Etobicoke North and Etobicoke Centre, could you shed light on who these various proponents are?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): To the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Transportation): I thank the member for the question. We are, in terms of looking at the issue around the GO train initiative to the air-rail link, involving all of the proponents and all of the constituents in the process. We are currently in review. We have responded to local concerns. GO Transit has been elevated to a project of an individual EA, and all alternatives to both GO expansion and to the air-rail link will be examined and all constituents and all stakeholders will have an opportunity to participate in those open discussions. As the Minister of the Environment indicated yesterday, those terms of reference are with the minister and they are currently under review. All along, this process has been open and transparent, and it will continue to be so as we move forward with the individual EA that has been developed as a result of the concerns brought forward by a number of constituencies.

Mr. Ferreira: The minister didn't really answer my question. As we know, it's a provincial environmental assessment process, but I'll add something. The business plan

for Blue 22 as it currently stands does not add up, yet we are throwing away \$300 million of public money to finance it. My question to you, Minister, is this: Will you confirm or deny that gaming interests are among the various proponents? Confirm or deny.

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: Obviously, the member knows more than I do. He obviously knows about the business plan, he knows about the proponents, he's well aware, so maybe he should be answering his own question. What I am saying to you in response is that the process has been open, transparent and is up to an individual EA. All constituencies, all stakeholders, will be involved in that process. The terms of review are with the Minister of the Environment as we speak now, and when the time is appropriate that will be followed through with. Everybody will be involved in that process. It is open; it is transparent. If, in fact, the member has some information that he'd care to share with me, I'd be more than delighted to receive it.

Mr. Ferreira: First of all, it gives me delight that on my fourth day in this House a minister of the cabinet says that I may know more than she does. Thank you, Minister. Thank you very much.

Minister, just to inform you, among the initial proponents was the Woodbine Entertainment Group. My constituents want to know, will Blue 22 indeed be a Trojan horse for blackjack 21?

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: I did indicate that the member may have more information than I do about this; I didn't indicate whether or not it would be valid information.

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): Pretty arrogant over there.

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: Absolutely.

There is a full EA underway. A full EA involves all-I don't know what part of A-L-L the member doesn't understand, but all alternatives are to be investigated. That's part of the process. That process is open; it's transparent. He has the opportunity to participate in it, just as everybody else does. So maybe I'll take back that reference. Maybe I do know more than he does.