Department of the Environment, much less gives that department any authority.

The Minister of the Environment is the forgotten man in this government. Maybe he does not even exist, Mr. Speaker! I sometimes wonder whether he is a phantom. Certainly he is rarely in the House, even at question period, and he is not here tonight. I wonder why neither he nor his parliamentary secretary is present for this most important debate. Just as the minister should be front and centre when a matter of such importance as the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act is discussed, so also should he be front and centre during any debate on Bill C-48. If we are to have a "phantom of the opera" in this House, then the Minister of the Environment should have a front seat.

In the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act, the governor in council is delegated certain powers under section 26. On May 14, 1971, that order in council authorized the powers to be delegated to three departments. The regulation of shipping was delegated to the Department of Transport; control of waste deposits was delegated to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, as well as to the Department of Transport where waste is deposited from ships. It might be understandable, perhaps, that the Department of the Environment was left out of the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act because the legislation effectively predated the establishment of that department in August, 1972. On the other hand, the act could have been amended or the order in council could have been changed.

But why, in December, 1980, eight years after that department was established, does it receive the same adverse treatment in Bill C-48, which we are debating tonight? This raises a fundamental question as to the way in which the government approaches—or does not approach—environmental issues, especially in the north. At least five departments are engaged in pollution control under the Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act and many more are involved in arctic pollution prevention if other acts are considered.

The situation that is being perpetuated by Bill C-48 has led to confusion about who is responsible for what. It has led to a proliferation of authority which has seriously weakened accountability. Duplication and overlapping of authority and initiative have hampered sound action. Bill C-48 will compound the problem.

Far worse, Mr. Speaker, Bill C-48 gives authority for environmental assessments to the two departments which have a vested interest in the very projects that might threaten the environment. That is like hiring the town arsonist as fire chief. The Department of the Environment was established because the government recognized such a danger in assigning environmental assessments to "proponent" departments such as Energy, Mines and Resources and Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

I should like now to quote something from the 1970 Speech from the Throne, as follows:

> There is an inherent conflict of interest . . . between those who are seeking the exploitation of non-renewable resources and those who are charged with the responsibility of protecting the environment.

How does that ringing statement of principle jibe with clause 49 and with Bill C-48 in general? There is a definite conflict, a contradiction—even a flip-flop.

Considering the kind of conflict of interest between development and protection that is enshrined in Bill C-48 and in almost every other piece of environmentally-related legislation presented by this government: it is no wonder that the government's performance to date in protecting the northern environment has been savagely criticized by environmentalists, conservationists, scientists, the public and even government officials. The most obvious example of this criticism relates to resource exploration and development by Dome Petroleum Ltd. and its subsidiary, Canadian Marine Drilling Ltd., know as Canmar, in the Beaufort Sea area.

The government received applications from Dome Petroleum Ltd. in late June, 1979. Those applications were for harbour facilities at McKinley Bay—I think that was an overwintering harbour—at Tuk Harbour, a deep harbour entrance, and at Wise Bay, a fuelling staging area.

Without getting into the complexities of environmental assessment procedures may I summarize the procedure that is usually followed—at least in theory—in these matters? First of all, an initial environmental screening is done to determine whether the project has significant environmental consequences. Then a formal environmental review and assessment are conducted if the initial screening identifies a significant environmental impact. This assessment is co-ordinated by the Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office of the Department of the Environment.

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The office is commonly referred to as FEARO. The catch is that the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is the federal government's principal operating arm in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. There is clear evidence that DIAND was successful in getting the federal government to approve the applications without assessments of the environmental consequences—against the advice of its own front-line advisory bodies, against common sense and public pressure, and against any environmental principles one might care to mention.

The two government environmental advisory bodies whose advice was flouted were the Arctic Waters Advisory Committee (commonly known as AWAC) and the Regional Ocean Dumping Advisory Committee, RODAC. The latter, that is the Regional Ocean Dumping Advisory Committee, recommended, for example, that the issuance be deferred of any ocean dumping or associated land use permit for dredging or harbour development at McKinley Bay "until the initial environmental evaluation report has been filed by the company and assessed by the government". Yet that permit—the permit in that particular case—was issued along with others in late August, within only weeks of application.