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Victim's father says:

Liberal reluctance on crime bill 'a cop-out'

By **KAREN SMITH**
The Champion

Family members of slain teenager Pamela Cameron were crossing their fingers at press time, hoping that Parliament would pass a bill to keep dangerous criminals in prison indefinitely.

on at 5:30 p.m. yesterday, calls for changes to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and the Criminal Code.

Val Meredith, a British Columbia-area Reform Party MP, introduced the Private Members' Bill in April, 1994.

"My bill allows Corrections and the National Parole Board to go to the courts to seek a dangerous offender designation on those inmates that they believe are still a danger to society," said Ms Meredith, the Reform Party's solicitor general critic.

Current legislation requires that a dangerous offender application be made at the beginning of an offender's sentence. Bill C-240 would allow for applications to be made just prior to the expiration of an offender's sentence.

"It could have been used against the man who is the chief suspect in the Cameron murder," she said. "Instead of having to release this man, he could have been kept behind bars indefinitely."

The bill was originally drafted by the former Progressive Conservative government's Solicitor General's Ministry in response to the murder of Christopher Stephenson in Ontario, but was never approved.

Support for the bill in the current Parliament also looks bleak, according to debate in the House of Commons. The Liberals, including Oakville-Milton MP Bonnie Brown, and Bloc Quebecois members have argued that the bill isn't viable.

"The Tories did not give sufficient priority to the bill to get it passed and now the Liberals have rejected the bill outright," Ms Meredith said.

Ms Brown, a Liberal MP, told *The Champion* last week that if the bill became law and was challenged in court, it would likely be struck down under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

She said it would be irresponsible for her to vote in favour of legislation that would end up solving nothing and wasting taxpayers' money.

"It is a quick solution that wouldn't pass the test of time," she said. "I will be probably voting against it. It looks as if it would falter."

Ms Brown said she would rather wait for the results of a federal-provincial task force that is currently examining the issue.

"Does this mean that this government will not introduce any legislation that puts the protection of society before the rights of criminals?" Ms Meredith said.

"Besides, this legislation is almost

identical to current dangerous offender legislation, which has been found constitutional."

Ms Brown's position is a "cop-out," said Paul Cameron, Pamela's father. "The public has had enough of this nonsense."

His daughter, an E.C. Drury High School student who had recently moved from Milton to South Surrey, B.C. with her family, was found suffocated in a wooded area near her new home October 5.

She disappeared the day before while walking to a service station to visit her boyfriend.

South Surrey RCMP allege her killer was a man released in November, 1993 from Ontario's Kingston Penitentiary, where he had served time for sexual assault. The man has been charged with first-degree murder.

Thousands of Miltonians have since supported a 12,000-signature petition calling for the passing of Bill C-240.

The Peninsula Community Action Society in South Surrey, B.C. was formed as a result of Pamela's murder. The group supports the bill adamantly, said member Wade Rogers, who lives beside the Camerons.

"Everybody you talk to wants this," he said.

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mortgage or taken control of the property."

"Just as the Town of Milton was left high and dry by Pigment & Chemical, so have we been left high and dry by the company," he said.

"Everyone was concerned about the persistent vandalism and the potential for someone to be injured. With the buildings down, all you have left is a piece of land which is relatively benign, according to the Ministry of Environment," said Mr. McAuley.

The bank vice-president said if someone was injured at the site, fingers would point at the bank and the Town, and it would involve legal battles. "At the end of the day it's not worth it."

Upon the site's sale, Mr. McAuley said the Town has first priority on

payment of back taxes. "Before the Royal Bank would ever see any money, taxes and the cost of demolition would be paid."

Pigment & Chemical has been the site of two break-ins and fires in recent months. The first was in August, the second on October 30.

Mr. McAuley said the Royal Bank could end up spending money on legal battles, public relations and the ongoing time required by the problem. "We're willing to put some money in for a resolution of the file and acknowledge the property has become an eyesore and potential problem for the Town of Milton," he said.

The MOEE says all hazardous chemicals were removed from the site as of August 30. The soil is contaminated, primarily with zinc, but not hazardous unless disturbed.

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