

Church opposes playing Mount Cashel inquiry tapes in court

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The Roman Catholic Church doesn't want videotapes of four witnesses at the 1989-90 Hughes Inquiry shown at the Mount Cashel civil trial taking place now.



Lawyer Mark Frederick, who represents the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corp. of St. John's, is arguing against an application made by former residents' lawyer Geoff Budden.

Newfoundland Supreme Court Justice Alphonsus Faour is presiding over a civil trial to determine whether the church is liable for the physical and sexual abuse of boys by certain Christian Brothers at the orphanage during the late 1940s to early 1960s.

The church contends it did not run the orphanage.

Budden wants the court to see some tapes from the Hughes Inquiry that took place nearly 30 years ago — evidence of a former resident, the inquiry investigator, an RCMP officer and a archdiocese official. All are deceased.

But Frederick said the Hughes Inquiry can't be used for a collateral purpose in the civil trial.

He said the inquiry was charged with a narrow focus — examining the failed police and justice system investigations of abuse allegations and how to prevent future failings and improve the system.

Frederick contends the inquiry did not examine the relationship between the Irish Christian Brothers and the Catholic Church and it is unfair and irrelevant to this trial.

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Follow bsweettweets for live tweets from the courtroom and look for expanded coverage online and in print Wednesday.