

Government settles with Mount Cashel resident from 1970s

The Telegram

Published: Nov 16, 2016 at midnight

Updated: Sep 30, 2017 at 6:12 a.m.

The provincial government has settled a \$750,000 lawsuit with a former Mount Cashel resident.



The Mount Cashel Orphanage in St. John's. The building was torn down in 1992.

It's believed to be the highest government payout to a sexual abuse survivor in the province, said lawyer Will Hiscock of Budden and Associates.

The figure was disclosed in an Order in Council approving the transfer of funds to Justice and Public Safety to settle the file, initiated in 2010.

The former orphanage resident gave a statement to the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary in 1975, but was placed back in the orphanage and remained there until the 1980s, Hiscock said. He had reported abuse by several Christian Brothers.

"It was an exceptionally strong case on liability," Hiscock said. "Government did a real service by taxpayers by settling it rather than go to court.

The settlement may draw out others who have never taken legal action.

Besides 18 cases reported to be before government, there are even more that haven't reached the stage of statements of claim.

Roughly 20 years ago, the provincial government settled a block of cases from the 1970s and '80s, handled by various prominent lawyers, so the high dollar figure of the recent case would reflect inflation.

In total there have been some 130 settlements involving allegations of abuse suffered at Mount Cashel at a total amount of about \$29.2 million, according to a Justice spokeswoman.

The current lawsuits are separate from a civil case against the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corp. of St. John's — those cases are from a much earlier era dating back to the late 1940s and mainly were ineligible for action against the provincial government because of a previous legal decision. The case, which the The Telegram has covered almost exclusively, is back in court in December.