

Local News

Province Signals Move To Acquire Schools in RC Church Bankruptcy

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Fears that public schools on the Avalon and Burin peninsulas could be sold off, leaving students out in the cold, have been eased somewhat following the latest proceedings in Supreme Court.

The roughly 30 schools from St. John's to Marystown are owned by the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's, which is trying pay off sex abuse claims linked to the former Mount Cashel Orphanage.

About \$30 million has been raised so far from the sale of churches and other parish property, with another \$20 million or so still needed to compensation more than 100 victims.

As a result, lawyers turned their attention to the schools, and how much they could get from those properties if the court said they were fair game.

Legislation states the schools must continue as is, under government control, as long as they're being used for education.

But lawyers for victims note they're owned by the St. John's Archdiocese, just like the churches, and should endure the same fate.

The court was set to hear arguments on that point this week.

But in a move long anticipated, and given the alternative, government lawyers have finally signalled a plan to buy out the schools once and for all, to keep them operating and educating.

They say they have instructions from their bosses to negotiate sale terms and make offers, which will happen over the next couple of months.

The court will hear how that's going when all hands return to Supreme Court on April 18th.

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