

An “Ongoing Conspiracy of Silence”

**2001 settlement thwarted
probe of crimes, advocates charge**

Save Lives

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If you have other data regarding psychiatric experiments upon children, or the use of violent or coercive psychiatric methods against them, *Freedom* also wants to hear from you.

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In 1999, Quebec Ombudsman Daniel Jacoby criticized the Quebec government’s “ongoing conspiracy of silence” and labeled its settlement offer to the Duplessis Orphans “unfair and humiliating.”²²

After comparing settlements in similar cases in other Canadian jurisdictions, Jacoby suggested a compensation package equal to \$56 million in U.S. currency — roughly \$700 per patient for each year he or she spent in an institution as a result of a wrongful

diagnosis, with an additional indemnity for physical or sexual abuse.

“The social context of the time cannot justify their internment in asylums for reasons more financial than medical, just as it cannot justify physical and sexual abuse,” wrote Jacoby. “Today’s society has a duty to officially recognize the harm done. Official apologies on the part of the government [and] the medical establishment...would undoubtedly be a good place to start.”²³

On September 26, 2001, the Quebec government approved a settlement of \$10,000 (Canadian) per person, plus \$1,000 per year of wrongful incarceration in mental institutions. No provisions were made for sexual or other abuse. If an Orphan refused to sign the agreement, he or she forfeited the right to the compensation.

Many Orphans were arbitrarily considered ineligible and hence received nothing. In an interview with *Freedom*, Rod Vienneau pointed to Paul St. Aubin as an example of those unjustly barred from the settlement.

Deprived of an education, St. Aubin, now 53, worked between the ages of 11 and 17 as a virtual slave on a Quebec farm. He then spent 18 years in the province’s mental institutions, where he received chlorpromazine, electric shock and at least two lobotomies.

Vienneau and others consider the 2001 settlement as nothing more than a means to block any genuine probe into crimes and misconduct. The settlement itself remains a subject of *Freedom*’s investigation.

In the late 1990s, a group of Orphans commissioned a study by Professor Leo-Paul Lauzon of the University of Quebec in Montreal. Lauzon found that certain institutions earned between \$70 million and \$100 million (Canadian) by fraudulently holding the Orphans.

That figure is supported by a letter from Maurice Duplessis himself, dated April 12, 1954, in which the Quebec premier agreed to pay one psychiatric facility alone, Mont Providence, \$6 million over a three-year period. At least 13 institutions housed the Duplessis Orphans for several decades.

\$100 million, of course, would be worth far more in today’s currency values.