More money for child care: Gillan [CA-PE] [13]

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EXCERPTS

P.E.I. is holding out for more federal funding before it signs a child care deal with Ottawa.

Prime Minister Paul Martin said the federal and provincial governments are close to an agreement during a short visit to the Island on Monday. But he also cautioned that a potential deal might be scuttled by a federal election.

"I think we are very close to a deal with P.E.I., and I'm looking very much forward to signing that agreement. I hope I can come back. That depends on what happens on Thursday."

Provincial Health Minister Chester Gillan said money is the last issue that needs to be settled. He explained that the other funding agreements are based on population, which amounts to \$3 million annually for the Island.

Gillan said establishing a child-care program in the province would cost much more than that.

The health minister said even if Martin does not make it back for an official signing ceremony, he would to have an agreement in principle by the end of the week.

Gillan said even if a federal election is called, the province will have the framework for an agreement.

"If it is a Liberal government then we'd say, 'you heretofore agreed on this particular set of priniciples and dollars, so let's sign the agreement.' And if its a new government that's exactly where we'd start with a new government as well."

The Island government said it is waiting for the federal government's next offer.

- reprinted from CBC Prince Edward Island

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