

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE - PRESS RELEASE ON THE PURCHASE OF NCB PROPERTY AT KING STREET

April 17, 2009.

The Ministry of Justice is concerned about media reports which have raised questions about the propriety of the Government's purchase of the NCB owned property at 52-54 King Street. The Daily Gleaner of Wednesday, April 15, 2009 suggested that the Ministry had considered a "larger" NCB owned property at Harbour Street for 22 million Jamaican dollars and chosen to spend the 128 million Jamaican dollars on the King Street property of smaller size instead.

"The report is considerably erroneous and does not reflect the discussion which took place," commented Senator Lightbourne. "First of all, the building at King Street is some five times the size that was reported. Second of all, the purchase price of 128 million Jamaican dollars includes not just the property at King Street but an adjacent property on Church Street which itself is larger than the reported size of the King Street property. Furthermore, there was never any discussion about the NCB property at Harbour Street or for that matter about the square footage of the actual buildings which were purchased. The discussion centered solely on the Ministry's plans for the use of the King Street property."

The Ministry of Justice which has been conducting the negotiations for the government has spent 128 million Jamaican dollars to purchase:

- a 50, 058 square ft building at 52-54 King Street which sits on 10,501 square ft of land, housing three floors plus a basement;
- a 15,541 sq feet parcel of land at 49-51 Church Street which is to be utilized as parking for the King Street property; and
- a number of fixtures and fittings on the King Street building, including a generator with a substantial capacity to serve other buildings in the Court system nearby.

The Ministry of Justice seeks at all times to ensure that its mandate is carried out with the greatest fiscal responsibility so that Jamaican taxpayers may at all times receive value for money. The Ministry continues also to strive to provide a fair and timely resolution of cases, establish sound court infrastructures and build public trust in the justice system.