

BELCA AWARD, May 17, 1996  
(BUILDING and EQUIPMENT LIFE CYCLE ASSOCIATION)  
COMMENTS ON AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE

MINISTER NAKAO, (BELCA) CHAIRMAN TAKAGI, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS AND FRIENDS, WE ARE VERY HONORED TO RECEIVE THIS HIGH AWARD, AND WE THANK THE BELCA COMMITTEE.

I THINK THAT THE U.S. AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE IN TOKYO IS INTERESTING FROM AN AMERICAN STANDPOINT AS WELL AS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE JAPANESE, BECAUSE IT WAS THE FIRST AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE THAT THE UNITED STATES BUILT ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

IT WAS BUILT BY THE OBAYASHI CORPORATION AND COMPLETED IN 1930. WE HAVE A HISTORY OF THE LONG LIFE OF THIS RESIDENCE THAT WE GIVE TO OUR GUESTS.

THE FIRST RESIDENT WAS AMBASSADOR FORBES FROM MASSACHUSETTS, WHO WAS VERY ANGRY BECAUSE STATE DEPARTMENT RULES PROHIBITED HIM FROM BRINGING HIS HORSE INTO THE ROOM TO SHOW TO HIS GUESTS. EVEN THOUGH THEY WOULD NOT ALLOW THE HORSE INSIDE, MANY AMBASSADORS HAVE BEEN PERMITTED TO LIVE THERE.

ONE VERY WELL-KNOWN MEETING, BETWEEN HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS, THE EMPEROR OF JAPAN, AND GENERAL MACARTHUR, TOOK PLACE IN THE LARGE LIVING ROOM IN 1945.

WHEN I ARRIVED, IT WAS IN VERY BAD SHAPE. AMBASSADOR ARMACOST SAID HE WOULD KEEP THE LIGHTS LOW SO THAT NO ONE COULD SEE HOW BAD IT REALLY WAS. WE THEREFORE BEGAN A RESTORATION EFFORT AND OBAYASHI WON THE BID FOR THIS PROJECT, WHICH TOOK NEARLY ONE AND A HALF YEARS. THEIR WORK WAS MAGNIFICENT, ON SCHEDULE, AND ACCORDING TO THE TERMS OF THE BID. WE ARE ALL VERY PLEASED.

IN ACCEPTING THIS AWARD, I WISH TO EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION TO THE OBAYASHI COMPANY, AND THE MANY DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

SPECIALISTS WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED. I CAME TO KNOW THE PROJECT MANAGER, KEN YOSHIDA, RATHER WELL. I ALSO WISH TO RECOGNIZE MR. POUNDS OF THE EMBASSY, MS. MURPHY OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT WHO WORKED ON THE INTERIOR, AND MR. BARNEY WHO DID THE SECOND FLOOR INTERIOR.

IT IS NICE TO KNOW THAT THIS NICELY RESTORED RESIDENCE WILL BE THERE FOR MANY YEARS AND BE AT THE CENTER OF U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONS.

THANK YOU AGAIN TO THE BELCA COMMITTEE FOR THIS HIGH HONOR.



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