

*Confidential*

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211 East 14th St. New York City, U. S. America.  
April 28th, 1890.

Count Okuma Shigenobu,  
Tokio, Japan.

My Dear Count Okuma:---

I was much gratified to hear from you, through Mr. Kato, a few weeks ago, and the news of your prospect of speedy recovery was especially welcome. The information which you sent me upon various subjects of interest and importance was extremely valuable, but that which related to your personal welfare was more welcome than all the rest. I continue to hope that there is a possibility of your making the long delayed journey to this country and to Europe, during the interval which will probably ensue before you are sufficiently strong to resume the public duties to which I am certain you will be loudly called. The exposition of 1892 may not be an event of such magnitude as it was at first expected to be, on account of the decision of Congress that the celebration is to be held in Chicago instead of in New York; but it will nevertheless be a great international jubilee, and, I think, well worthy of attendance by you in the capacity of Commissioner from Japan. I speak with the utmost confidence, that you have only to express a wish for this appointment to have it conferred upon you with the greatest willingness; and it appears to me that there could hardly be any other way so convenient to yourself, and so gratifying to your friends, of carrying into effect a scheme of foreign travel, which I believe you have long contemplated but which your official occupations have hitherto prevented you from executing.

I have for some time past had it in my mind to ask you if you are now sufficiently at leisure to take into consideration a letter which I desire to write to you, concerning the events of my visit to America and Europe in 1880. I am aware that the circumstances have ceased to have a lively interest, but I have recently been led to believe that I have for many years been under a mistake as to the amount of information possessed by you with reference to my final action at Washington. In conversation with Mr. Shugio I have learned that it is extremely doubtful if my closing letters from Washington and New York



were ever received by you. If this is the case, you may have been kept in ignorance of several facts which I consider highly important, and with which I strongly desire that you should be made acquainted. When I returned to Japan, in 1882, I was somewhat struck by the circumstance that you made no reference to what I had written to you just before leaving Washington, but I supposed that you had personal reasons for maintaining silence upon everything connected with your actions as Minister of Finance. It did not seem proper for me to press these matters upon you, and I never brought them forward, though I had no suspicion at that time that you were not entirely familiar with them. I should not like to have that old chapter of my history completely closed until I can feel sure that you positively and exactly know what I succeeded in accomplishing in the mission which you confided to me. Of course you were aware of the result which followed, a few months after my return to Japan, but, if my letters were never read by you, you cannot know that the result was brought about directly by my endeavors;--that I received a promise from the highest authorities in the United States that the Indemnity money should be restored, at a certain date; and that I communicated to you what that date would be, the conditions under which restitution would be made, the channels through which it would pass, and a variety of other particulars which I take pleasure in believing would have been of no slight importance to you if you had retained your position as leader of the national administration. If I hear from you that you have leisure to read the statement which I desire to send, I will prepare it without delay. It may help to clear up some obscure passages in Japanese politics which have never been as thoroughly explained to you as they should be.

I received, not long ago, a letter from Viscount Aoki, informing me that the arrangement which you were kind enough to put in force last year was to be continued. I at once acknowledged his courtesy, but I think it my duty to inform you that I regard myself as chiefly indebted to you for that mark of appreciation and good will.

I am yours very sincerely,

*E. H. House.*

(Dictated)

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211 East 14th St., New York City, U. S. America.  
April 26th, 1890.

My Dear Mr. Kato:

I am extremely obliged for your kind attention in acting as the medium of communication between me and Count Okuma, and for the trouble which you have taken in informing me so accurately of his views and opinions upon many subjects of interest. I shall be still further indebted to you if you will acquaint him with the contents of the letter which I send herewith, and will at the same time explain to him that my lameness makes it very difficult for me to write with my own hand, and that I am obliged to use this new and somewhat unfamiliar method of writing. While manipulating the instrument which produces these characters I have been much struck by the conviction of its applicability to Japanese purposes, and I believe that it would be found of the greatest convenience in transcribing private communications, even if it could not be utilized for public documents. Of course the square symbolic characters could not be used, but the kana is admirably adapted to the mechanism, and an expert writer would have no difficulty whatever in transcribing anything that might be verbally delivered, quite as rapidly as the words could be uttered by the speaker. Perhaps it might interest you to give some thought to this subject, for I believe that a large and profitable enterprise might be founded upon the introduction of typewriters to Japan.

I see by the date of your letter of January 15th that you were residing at Waseda. I have many delightful recollections of that beautiful spot, and I can well believe that, surrounded by such scenery, and in so tranquil and beautiful a seclusion, Count Okuma will find the rest and relief from care which must have been necessary in his enfeebled condition. I have two fine photographs of the house and garden, which <sup>were given</sup> you gave to me by Mr. Shugio, and I often look at them with the pleasant consciousness that I am gazing upon the residence of a friend to whom I am warmly attached, and a statesman for whom I have the sincerest respect. But I nevertheless hope and believe that the allurements of Waseda will not be sufficient to keep him long in retirement, and that before many months shall have passed he will again be prominent in directing the councils and guarding the welfare of the Empire.

I am,

Yours very truly,

E. H. Howe.

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To Mr. Kato.

My Dear Mr. Kato: The inclosure  
written, as you will see by the date, <sup>two</sup>  
months ago, but I was suddenly seized with a  
very severe illness, which kept me unconscious  
for many weeks, and from which I am now  
slowly recovering. No one in my house knew any-  
thing about the letter, and it therefore remained  
unsent. But I trust it is not even now too  
late to let it go. Will you kindly explain this  
to Count Okuma? The letter to him was written  
at the same time.

Yours very truly,  
E. H. House.

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伯爵大隈重信殿

Count Okuma Shigenobu.

Tokio.

Japan.



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1874



