

Karl Jorda reported on the historic PIPA-sponsored "International Conference of the Patent Leaders' Team of U.S. Firms and the Japanese Patent Office", held in Tokyo last February 13-16 at the invitation of JPO Director General Wakasugi and with the intention to show on a "Seeing is Believing" basis that the JPO is impartial.

It was attended by 23 US corporate patent counsels and 44 JPO officials. The JPO had done their homework; they fielded an outstanding "faculty" and handed out excellent text materials. The U.S. team was provided with an overview of the Japanese patent system and JPO administration and practice and a tour of their facilities. A separate chemical/mechanical case study session and Q & A periods were included. It was a great learning experience for all the participants.

Meetings with JAPATIC and JIII as well as the PAAJ were also on the program. Interestingly, PAAJ members asked us "to help them help us" vis-a-vis the JPO.

Our concerns with JPO practice were addressed. We limited them to five areas: 1) very short overly general Official Actions 2) reluctance to hold interviews, 3) two-months period to bring oppositions, 4) overly technical rules for claiming and 5) incomplete-invention/change-in-gist practice. We had interesting give-and-take discussions. They "heard" our views and promised reconsideration and change where feasible. Inasmuch as the JPO official themselves also stressed "internationalization" and "harmonization" of patent laws and further inasmuch as Japanese R&D and technology has come of age and caught up, there is indeed hope for change. Improvements in some areas (Official Actions and Interviews) have already been noted. The program has quite apparently been "packaged" for repeats, e.g., for a European delegation and for other U.S. visits in connection with future PIPA Congresses in Japan.

It will be important to have follow-up. We have been invited to submit additional questions and problems and to stop by the PTO whenever in Japan. We must avail ourselves of these opportunities.

Additional information and materials will gladly be supplied upon request.