

25 YEARS AGO

January 31, 1997

THE magnificent dining room at Skibo Castle, where Andrew Carnegie entertained some of the world's leading figures, was "stripped" of all its furniture before Peter de Savary bought the 7250 acre estate 18 months ago.

The colourful South country financier revealed the disappearance of the furniture to a party of luncheon guests last week.

He said that the splendidly panelled room, where the 25 guests were comfortably seated, was absolutely devoid of furniture when he moved in. He asked the factor, Angus MacLaren, to describe in detail how the room looked and set out to try to find the missing furniture.

Mr de Savary said: "I got someone on the case and they tracked down all the original Skibo dining room furniture that Carnegie had made. It was just about to go to America and be sold. We managed to get the buyer uncommitted and out of it and we bought it back. It took eight men to lift the massive oak sideboard into the room."

Mr Savary said he had also managed to rescue Carnegie's Beckstein piano, which had also been sold on.