

## *Genoa, Lord Grey and the League*

In connection with the second birthday party of the League, Lord Grey delivered a speech at Bristol which has aroused comment. He spoke as President of the League of Nations Union, outlined the achievements of the League, and appealed for support.

What he himself admitted to be the most interesting part of his speech, however, was a criticism of the coming Genoa Conference.

"I am not at all favourably impressed", he admitted, "by the proposal to hold a Conference of this kind. It is hoped that the outcome will be a great federation of European nations, pledged not to make aggression against each other. That is a League of Nations, and it looks to me as if this Conference were, in fact, the scrapping of the existing League in order to go back and begin to form another.

"That is not putting the clock forward, but putting the hands back.

"I believe that when you get a really just view of the Conference, people will come to the conclusion that what it sets out to do would be better done through the machinery of the League of Nations. Germany and Russia are to be invited to this new Conference. I want to see both these countries, when they are ready, get into the existing League of Nations. If they are to be helped, I should like them helped, by the existing League."

Referring to this speech, the "New Statesman" (London) says: "We cannot congratulate the League of Nations upon the speech which Lord Grey delivered in its support at Bristol. We happen to agree with Lord Grey in not taking a very favourable view of the prospects of the proposed Genoa Conference, but we certainly do not agree with him in condemning it as a usurpation of the functions of the League. Many of the League's most zealous supporters seem to be succumbing on the one hand to a tendency to form a sort of mutual admiration society, and on the other, to the disease of "institutionalism". They speak and write as if the institution itself, which they most properly support, were more important than the purpose or the principles for which it stands.

"We should be the last to deny the necessity, or even the practical efficacy of machinery as such, but to defend the machinery at the expense of the purpose seems to us a very misplaced kind of enthusiasm. Conferences like that at Genoa threaten the League with nothing worse than enlargement, and possibly, sooner or later, a change of name.

"The Genoa Conference, if it does anything, is going to do the work of the League, just as Washington did it".