

The Press Conference of the Empire.

Lord Rosebery's Inaugural Speech.

The meeting together in conference of the press of the Empire in Great Britain is perhaps the most interesting current event in our larger politics. The conference opened some three weeks ago in London, and the occasion was made memorable by the speech of Lord Rosebery, who had been chosen to deliver the first greetings to the delegates from overseas. The speech was specifically addressed to the colonies. Civil servants, too, will note the unfeigned compliment which the great statesman paid in passing to the permanent service of Britain. THE CIVILIAN reprints the speech in full from the English papers recently to hand. For this, sufficient excuse is the historic place which the speech has already taken in the discussion of this all important problem, and its greatness as oratory.

The Occasion.

As to the nature of the occasion, and the manner in which the speech appealed to the immediate audience, the following may be quoted from The London Daily Telegraph, the proprietor of which, Lord Burnham, was in the chair:

"Whether in the brilliancy of the scene, the significance of its meaning, or the memorable character of the speaking, no public occasion could have excelled the banquet of welcome offered by the journalists of the Mother Country to those of the outer Empire. In the power and range of the influence it represented it was by far the greatest gathering in the history of the Press. No other newspaper congress in any country has

ever matched or approached it. The event, non-partisan on the one hand, yet of the first public importance on the other, was as if created to bring out the whole genius of Lord Rosebery's gifts, and he rose to the moment in the wonderful speech which no other man living could have made.

"With less than the variety of the orator's own style, who can attempt to do justice to the unsurpassable excellence of the inaugural oration? In its extraordinary interplay of opposites, the effort not only outdid all expectations of an audience captured and delighted, though in its nature one of the most critical in the world, but ranked at once above even the previous best of its author. For a quarter of a century now Lord Rosebery has been known to the world as the possessor of a platform art unmatched of its sort. In times of crisis vast audiences have hung upon his lips. The whole nation has waited upon his words. Again and again his utterances were like the spirit of England itself, thinking aloud. In the lighter art of his occasional addresses no contemporary pretended to rival him. He even then displayed in alternation different qualities seldom permitted to one man in different moods. On Saturday he combined them all, and added new.

"Since his retirement from party leadership his gifts are rather perfected than impaired, and his audience critical by the habit of its training, as we have said, was an instrument which he had at his command. This being an age of business is an age of debate, when the world is engaged