British Laborism Triumphant?

ORGANIZED Labor in Great Britain is coming into its own. It has refused to submerge its identity in the interest of the government and the war, and is compelling its recognition as a part of the governing system of the nation.

In a speech in the House of Commons last month, Minister of Munitions Lloyd George declared in so many words that the winning of the war depends upon whether Organized Labor would "allow" the government to do certain things:

"We want eighty thousand skilled men and from two to three hundred thousand unskilled men for these new [munitions] factories. . . Upon the supply of labor depends, I think, our success in this war. . . . Here only organized labor can help us. . . . The whole question depends on organized labor. *Unless it allows us to put unskilled workers on the work which hitherto has been the monopoly of skilled labor* we cannot perform this task."

The nature of this appeal, the complete absence of the former threats of compulsion, may be a shrewd and politic move on the part of Lloyd George. But at the same time it would never have been uttered if the unions had not the whip hand of the government. More than the strike of the Welsh miners, it shows the determination of Laborism to impose its will *along conservative and nationalistic lines* upon the government—to secure a share in the governing system of the nation. The indications multiply that the war will leave Laborism stronger economically and politically than any other class in Great Britain.

And, simultaneously, it shows an intensification of the cleavage between skilled and unskilled labor. The central point in Lloyd George's appeal is that organized labor allow the government "to put unskilled workers on the work which hitherto has been the monopoly of the skilled." In other words, Laborism is not sticking up for a class demand, but for a *caste* advantage.—*F.*