

Drive Through Belgium By British to Outflank Prussians

Bombardments on Seacoast Cause London to Look for Movement Where Landing Would Be Easier Than at Gallipoli or Land Attack in Ypres Sector

London, June 3.—Whether it is the purpose of the British commander to make a new attack on the Prussian lines in Belgium north of the present Arras front or to continue the drive at Douai is of course known only to the highest military authorities, but newspaper men are permitted to surmise and comment on the situation much more openly than was the case a year ago, for instance, during the Somme advance. The general belief among observers here is that an attack through Belgium is possible, although difficult.

British troops, however, have never yet been known to falter before difficulties, and recent news of repeated attacks on the Belgian seacoast is interpreted by many as the beginning of an offensive in that direction. The official report on Saturday that naval aeroplanes and seaplanes had attacked the Prussian bases at Zeebrugge, Ostend and Bruges, dropping several tons of explosives, gives color to the supposition. For several days Berlin also has been telling of

Prussians back on the Belgian frontier.

But an advance through Northern Belgium toward Bruges and Antwerp would outflank the whole Prussian line further south, throw the Kaiser's armies almost entirely out of France and drive them back to the Meuse, with Liege, Namur, Givet and Sedan as principal bases. Such an attack, even if unsuccessful, would greatly relieve the strain on the French troops now gallantly holding the front from St. Quentin to Auberive.

A landing on the seacoast would offer far less natural obstacles than did that at Gallipoli and could be much better protected by the guns of the fleet. Such an operation probably would draw the Kaiser's warships from their skulking places behind Heligoland and result in that colossal engagement for which the men of the British navy have been so ardently wishing the last two years.

Prussia will hold on the seacoast as long as she can, because it furnishes such an excellent base for her submarine operations. But with the greater skill now acquired in combatting the undersea warfare and with the arrival of American vessels to relieve Britain of part of the work it is not at all unlikely that the attempt will be made.

The fortified sand dunes of the coast offer no such obstacles as Vimy Ridge, for instance. The country is perfectly flat for fifty miles eastward, affording no shelter for troops, and dugouts would be merely living tombs for those who hid in them. Flanders is the ideal country for open warfare and perhaps for that reason, has been one of the chief battlefields of Europe ever since the days of Julius Caesar.

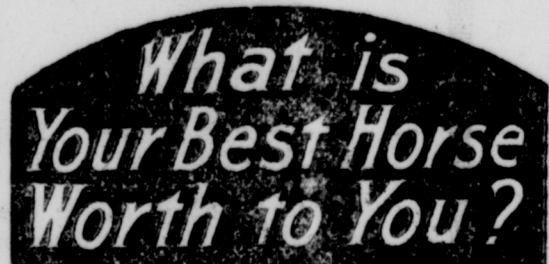
AT THE YPRES SALIENT

With all its turnings, the allied front across Belgium is less than forty-five miles long and only about thirty-five miles in a straight line from half a mile north of Nieuport baths to the frontier, two miles northwest of Armentieres. Belgians, reinforced by French artillery, hold half the front from the coast to Boesinghe station, just below Het Sas, about three and a half miles north of Ypres. Here a semi-circular salient begins, of which Ypres is the centre, and sweeps round to St. Eloi about the same distance south of the city. Prussians hold the ground on

the north, and the semi-circular curve is dotted with numerous hills whence they can shell all the roads leading to Ypres. Below, the ground is generally flat as far as La Bassée, south of the frontier, and is broken by swampy lands and many canals and ditches which would hamper large operations. A direct move from Ypres would cost far more than the advantage to be gained, judging from the attempt at Hill No. 60 in 1915.

Comparative quiet on the Arras and Aisne fronts would also point to an offensive further north.

A large part of the Belgian line is impassable because the sea was let in and still covers the ground between the Yeer Canal and the Nieuport-Dixmude Railway. The water is too deep to ford and the only actions reported for months are those of night patrols on rafts. So it would appear that the most available openings for an advance into Belgium would be either south of Ypres, around Wytschaete, where Berlin to-day reports violent bombardments; or north of Ypres, between Het Sas and Dixmude, or as a third alternative, by a landing on the coast, where Saturday's British report tells of the aerial attack on Prussian bases.



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No Reason For Surprise

(The London Opinion).

An American visitor just dropped in to see me seemed surprised that our newspapers are horrified because the Germans have formed a limited company to treat their dead soldiers scientifically, and turn them into hog food.

"After all," he said, "we all have our own idea of Paradise, and though the pig-sty seems about the limit, the Hun ought to know what is best for his own people."

Raiders Paid A Terrible Price

London, June 7.—The morning newspapers to-day display, with gratification, the news of the toll exacted from the German air raiders, which they remark was a terrible price to pay for a raid which effected virtually nothing of military importance. It is generally assumed that the ten German machines were lost, which some of the commentators express the belief is almost enough to cause the Germans to cease repetitions of their airplane raids.

The damage inflicted on the raiders, in connection with the reduction in sinkings of vessels by submarines and anaval and airplane attacks on enemy bases in Belgium, has installed a spirit of elation in the editorials and news columns generally.

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"My Division Exists No More," Said German

Admitted That the British Artillery Fire Quickly Wiped Out Tanton Regiments

Men From Russian Front Glad to be Taken Prisoners

They Had Never Seen Fire of Such Intensity—Officer Admitted Germans Could Not Compete With It, and Have no Chance to Win—Hindenburg Rushing up Reinforcements

BRITISH HEADQUARTERS, IN FRANCE, June 9, via London.—(By the Associated Press.)—Comparative quiet reigned yesterday along the front of the latest British attack which wrested the Messines Ridge from the Germans on Thursday. The noise of the guns was quite appalling, but otherwise the day was one of almost complete calm. The night was also quiet and the British have thoroughly consolidated their gains and are able to defend them against any counter attack the temporarily bewildered Germans may commence.

Prisoners kept coming in yesterday in increasing hundreds, dazed by nearly a week of most terrifying gunfire and half-finished as a result of the "starvation barrage" the British had kept on their lines of communication and supply. These men upon reaching the cool grassy spots within the barbed wire stockades erected for their anticipated arrival, stripped themselves to the waist, tore off their heavy trench boots and flung themselves on the ground where they were soon lost in the heavy sleep of complete exhaustion. For them the war is over and their relief at being out of it was only too apparent.

The men who had seen most of their military service on the Russian front were the most demoralized of all. "We had heard much of the conditions on the western front," said one of the captured German officers to the Associated Press, "but we always thought there was much exaggeration about them. We had no realization what war was. When we came from Russia a few weeks ago we were told we were going against the British, but that we need not worry, as the English were not in a position to accomplish anything serious against us in view of their offensive at Arras. The artillery fire we experienced when we first came to the Messines ridge was more terrible than anything we had seen or heard on the eastern front.

"Then a week ago the English started their intensive bombardment. It was horrible to endure. Few of us ever thought we would get out alive. There was a distinct sense of relief when the mine was exploded on Thursday morning. We knew then that an attack was under way, and that we soon should be dead or in a position to surrender. Most of us can frankly say that we preferred the latter.

"This experience of ours should end the war. We have no possible chance to win. Two days ago my division was made up of three splendid German regiments. We saw these men shrivel up in a hurricane of fire with which we could not possibly compete. Now, my division exists no more.

This officer had no complaints to make against the German higher command, and no apparent desire to win favor from his British captors. He was so shaken by the ordeal he had undergone that he seemed to find at least momentary relief in expressing, in excellent English, the thoughts which were uppermost in his mind. The experience of his division apparently is evidence that Germany is not finding a solution here of her military difficulties in the transferring of her old eastern units to the western front.

[Vast numbers of German troops are

being rushed forward by Field Marshal von Hindenburg in an effort to stem the British torrent which has swept over the heights dominating the Lille plain and threatens to sweep the Teutons from the great industrial section of northern France. As every succeeding clash between the mighty armies on the western front has dwarfed the one which preceded it, so the initial phase of the battle of Messines promises to be mere a prelude to the struggle which is to come.

The British thrust follows almost on the heels of the triumphant announcement by the German Emperor that the allied offensive in the west had been definitely checked, bearing out reports that the Germans had underestimated the power and resources of their foes and were not ready to withstand the terrible blow which fell upon them. From the captured heights the British guns Friday are sending their message of death across a low and level plain of scarcely five miles in breadth, which separates them from the industrial capital of northern France.

Lille is the chief of a little group of three cities in which prior to the war centered France's great textile industries. It formerly had a population of 210,000 and its two sister cities, Roubaix and Hourcoring, were the homes of about an equal number. Tourcoing and Roubaix stand on rising ground from four to six miles northwest of Lille, the only high land now in front of the British. To their right, however, Lille is protected by a ridge which stands between it and Armentieres, the town on which the right wing of the attacking British army rests. An advance into the plain will outflank this ridge.

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increased activity from the North Sea to Ypres. To-day's Berlin report speaks of very intense artillery firing in the Wytschaete bend, south of Ypres.

WOULD CLEAR HALF OF BELGIUM

A move from the Belgian line between Dixmude and Nieuport or from the seacoast, if successful, would be of even more far-reaching importance than a victorious advance by the British from the Arras front or the French from the Chemin-des-Dames. If the French should capture Laon or the British take Douai, it would only force the