

In order to understand the task before the corps as a whole, and the 1st Canadian Division in particular, a brief description of the ground and the enemy defences is necessary.

THE COUNTRY TO BE TAKEN.

On the evening of the 29th our front line followed roughly the valley of the Sensee river from Fontaine-les-Croiselles to Haucourt, where it bent back over the small ridge between this river and the valley of the Cojeul, then over the high ground east of Boiry-Notre Dame, and continued in a general north-westerly direction to the valley of the Scarpe. North of the Scarpe the operations were carried out merely to protect the flank of the main attack south of this stream, and need not be considered here. While the valley of the Scarpe began to bend to the northward practically at our front line, the valley of the Trinquis river began almost at once, and ran due east, joining the Sensee valley 5,000 yards east of our line.

From ten to twelve thousand yards beyond our line was the valley and the waterway of the Canal du Nord, running almost due north and south. Cutting the Canadian Corps front in halves and running in a south-easterly direction straight to Cambrai, a distance of thirteen miles, was the tree-lined Arras-Cambrai road.

The natural features, then, were these : Two valleys converging on our northern flank, forming an isolated triangle of ground to be dealt with ; then two more convergent valleys, those of the Sensee and the Canal du Nord, with the high ground between, forming a plateau on the right flank, with a distance of 10,000 yards to go before the canal was reached, and on the left breaking into more sharply defined valleys and ridges as the junction of the valleys was approached.

With the exception of one small jog, the Arras-Cambrai road formed the left flank of the 1st Canadian Division. The right flank ran 3,500 yards south of and parallel to this road.

On the front of this division, therefore, the ground features were simple. First came the gradual upward slope along the crest