

HUNS LEAVE BEHIND A GRIM PATH OF RUIN

Retirement of Germans Releases Perhaps 200,000 Soldiers Whom Von Hindenburg May Use in Bold Counter Attack in Attempt to March on Calais—Paris Expects Some Such Move.

French troops, pushing hard on the heels of the retreating Germans, were yesterday within striking distance of the "Hindenburg line," the supposed goal of their retiring foe. The milestones on this line are the historic towns of Lille, Cambrai, St. Quentin, Laon and La Fere. The troops of General Neville were rushing towards St. Quentin yesterday at a rate almost unprecedented in the present world war, and reached a point within five miles of the city. The French have by this time either entered St. Quentin or the German retreat has halted.

The British Near Cambrai.

In the meantime, to the north, the British doggedly pushed onward toward Cambrai and were apparently within striking distance of that town, the heart of the Lille-La Fere line and famous since the days of the Romans. The British are advancing more slowly than the French. The theory that the Germans propose to halt their retreat on the Hindenburg line has been put forward by military critics in the Allied capitals, but there has been no indication from Berlin as to the plans of the German general staff, and the purpose and meaning of the dramatic retreat of the invaders of France remain clothed in considerable mystery.

A Drive For Calais?

French military observers estimate that the German retirement has already released 150,000 to 200,000 troops who are available for a long predicted counter-offensive to be launched against the Allied lines at some speculative point. The Paris newspapers regard some such move on the part of Hindenburg as almost certain and discuss the possibility of another tremendous effort to smash a way through to Calais.

What Berlin Says.

Berlin, Mar. 19, via London, Mar. 20.—The morning newspapers today gave the German public its first news of the big events on the front in France. All published articles by military experts explain the movement as part of the strategic plan of the general staff for a decision on the western front and a master stroke to violate the preparations of the Entente for an offensive, giving a decided advantage to the Germans. These writers are unanimous in expressing the fullest confidence in Field Marshal Von Hindenburg.

Hun Destruction.

British headquarters in France, Mar. 19, via London, Mar. 20.—(From a staff correspondent of the Associated Press)—The deliberate character of the destruction wrought by the Germans before their withdrawal from Peronne is painfully evident in the once beautiful avenue of trees leading to the railway station. These trees were untouched by shell fire, but each one was hacked in two with axes and the gashes and chips showed that the work was done within the last few days. The beautiful gardens of the outlying houses were also wrecked and every fruit tree within several miles of the town was sawed two-thirds of the way through and then broken down.

Ruined Villages.

The correspondent of the Associated Press was among the first visitors to Peronne in the wake of the British troops who have now swept well beyond that place. It was necessary to pass through half a score of ruined villages, which only a few days ago were within the zone of intense artillery fire, before reaching the banks of the Somme. Crossing the stream on

LORD KITCHENER DEFENDED BY FORMER PREMIER ASQUITH

London, Mar. 20.—An energetic defence of Lord Kitchener was made in the House of Commons today by Mr. Asquith, who replied to the criticisms levelled at his government in the recently published report of the Dardanelles commission. "Lord Kitchener was endowed with formidable personality, and disposed, by nature, to keep his own counsel," said Mr. Asquith, "but it is a mistake to suggest that he did not consult military opinion. That is untrue, but it is true that during the early months of the war he acted as his own chief of staff."

"When war broke out the general staff were sent to the front. Their places were taken by officers who had been in retirement. The best staff and highest authority at that time was Lord Kitchener himself. Upon no man in history had a heavier burden been cast, and nothing fills me with greater indignation than attacks made on Lord Kitchener, whose memory is in no danger, and will live."

Mr. Asquith said the Dardanelles expedition was primarily a naval one, because Lord Kitchener proved, to the satisfaction of the war council, that troops to make a joint military and naval undertaking were not available. The war council spent three weeks in examining the country's available resources in men and in obtaining opinions of experts. British and French expert opinion favored the enterprise.

The delay in sending troops, Mr. Asquith continued, was then bad and was brought to bear by both the British and French commanders-in-chief to keep their troops in France. Mr. Asquith asserted the Dardanelles operations had saved the situation in the Caucasus; prevented the destruction of Bulgaria to the Central Powers; destroyed some of the finest troops in the Turkish army and contributed to the favorable events witnessed in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Persia.

Winston Spencer Churchill, former first lord of the admiralty, severely criticized the manner in which the Dardanelles commission's report had been prepared. "They built up the narrative by clippings and snippings from documents, and by single sentences from the evidence of witnesses," said Mr. Churchill. He added that this method was in direct conflict with accepted principles, and detrimental to public and personal interests.

Mr. Churchill admitted, however, that the commissioners had swept away, directly or by implication, many serious and reckless charges, and that the burden of responsibility which he had borne alone for the last two years was now shared with the most eminent men the country had produced in generations. He therefore welcomed the report as an instalment of fairness.

This decision with regard to the Dardanelles, said Mr. Churchill, was not based on the opinions of experts, but on the plans of experts and the readiness of experts to execute those plans. Nobody had a right to say naval opinion was not marshalled behind the admiralty's action. The speaker deprecated what he characterized as attempts to ascertain whether the experts were enthusiastic toward the enterprise long after it had failed and at the time the search was being made for a culprit. Such methods were pernicious in the last degree to efficiency and the resolute conduct of the war.

Warmly denying that he urged Lord Fisher, then first sea lord, to give his silent and reluctant consent to the enterprise, Mr. Churchill said: "Lord Fisher did not declare definitely that he intended to undertake the operations. After balancing all the possibilities he exerted himself to the utmost, and even offered to go out himself and take charge of it. It was not until the new situation had arisen, and the admiral on the spot was unwilling to go forward, that Lord Fisher said he would not press him."

Then, Mr. Churchill added, the differences between Lord Fisher and himself began, for the first time.

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SPONGE CAKE

1 cup sugar
1/2 cup water
3 eggs
2 teaspoons Royal Baking Powder
1 cup flour
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup cold water
1 teaspoon flavoring

DIRECTIONS: Beat sugar and water until syrupy, add a thread and add to the stiffly beaten whites of eggs, beating until the mixture is cold. Sift together three times, the flour, salt and baking powder; beat yolks of eggs until thick; add a little at a time flour mixture and egg yolks alternately to white of egg mixture, stirring after each addition. Add 1/2 cup cold water and flavoring. Mix lightly and bake in moderate oven one hour.

The old method called for six eggs and no baking powder

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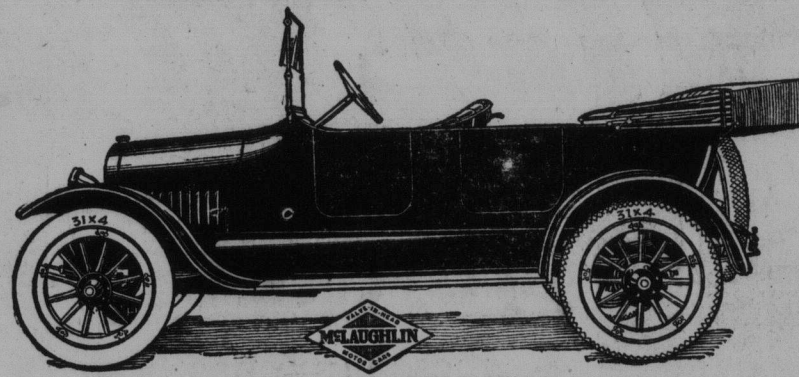
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