

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

ON May 31, 1916, the German High Sea Fleet was brought to an engagement off Jutland Bank, off the coast of Denmark. Earlier in the day Admirals von Scheer and von Hipper had put out from their bases upon 'an enterprise directed northward', in the language of the German Admiralty.¹ The phrase, if it does not conceal indefinite purpose, certainly connotes an enterprise other than the engagement on May 31, though the semi-official narrative of the battle, published on June 5, announced Vice-Admiral von Scheer to have left port 'to engage portions of the British Fleet, which were repeatedly reported recently to be off the south coast of Norway'.² Having regard to the patent facts of the naval situation, the statement is merely bombastic, except in so far as the surprise and destruction of a scouting battle-cruiser squadron may have been hoped for.

Perhaps the 'enterprise directed northward' contemplated interference with the flow of munitions to Archangel from British ports, and therefore the delaying of the imminent Russian offensive. In fact, the latter began immediately after the veritable issue of the Battle of Jutland, at first confused by Teutonic hysteria, was recognized; though the coincidence may be due rather to the crippling of Germany's naval strength and her consequent inability to give naval support to Hindenburg in the Baltic. It may have been an additional purpose

¹ Dated June 1; published in the English press on June 3.

² *The Times*, June 6.