

OVER THE TOP

many as we can in the process. These pushes are always on a greater scale and require thorough organization and preparation to be successful. If they should fail, our last condition is worse than our first. We have not only wasted all our immense preparations but we have lowered the spirits of our own men, and raised and encouraged the fighting spirit of the enemy.

The man who is sitting comfortably in his library five or six thousand miles from the scene of battle notes on the map on his wall that it is only five inches from the firing line of the Allies to the Rhine. He may decide that it should be an easy matter to bring up a few million troops, break through the enemy lines, push a million men through the gap, cut the communications of the opposing forces, hurl the enemy back into the Rhine, and make him sue for peace.

On paper, and with the aid of a vivid imagination, this may look easy. In reality the preparations for a great advance are enormous. For weeks before the push, even for months,