

THE SITUATION THAT MIGHT BATTLE FLEET DEPLOYED ON BOARD WING COLUMN.

Diagram II.

It should be borne in mind that no information as to the position of the Enemy Battle Fleet was received until 6. 14. P. M., and that the only reports received had been one at 6. 6. P. M., giving a bearing of the Enemy Battle Cruisers from the "Lion", and a report at 5. 50. P. M. from the "Southampton" to the effect that the Enemy Battle Fleet bore north-east from his Battle Cruisers (and were therefore presumably ahead of them and right ahead of our Battle Fleet.)

There had therefore been no sufficient information on which to re-dispose the guides of columns; deployment on the starboard wing column to meet an enemy before the starboard beam would necessarily be an awkward manoeuvre as it would involve a considerable alteration of the starboard wing column to port and a very large alteration of course of the remaining columns when coming into line astern of it.

A torpedo attack during deployment would under these conditions throw the British Battle Fleet into great confusion and a concentration of gunfire on the turning point would be very effective; our own gunfire, owing to the large alterations of course and the consequent difficulty of obtaining correct fire control data would be correspondingly ineffective; our own destroyers had been spread ahead of the Battle Fleet as a submarine screen until 6. 8 P. M. and were moving across the front in an unformed condition to the two flanks.

The movements that would probably have resulted and the number of ships on each side in action are shown in the diagram for each 3-minute interval from 6. 16 to 6. 28 P.M.,

The three ships of the 5th. Battle Squadron would eventually have come into line ahead of the 6th. division, but would possibly have masked the fire of that division during the movement.

