

## **The rise and fall of David Lloyd George**

### **Battles with Haig**

The balance of power at the front had shifted violently towards Germany. Having made a peace with Russia, Germany could now pour troops onto the Western Front. They now outnumbered the allies by over 200,000 men and they were massing for an attack they believed would win the war.

With British troops stretched to breaking point their commander Sir Douglas Haig asked the prime minister for reinforcements. It would not be an easy meeting.

The two men loathed each other. Lloyd George didn't trust Haig. He thought he was asking for more lives to be thrown away in another futile offensive. So on March 14 1918 Haig came here to beg for more troops. He was refused.

Seven days later the Germans unleashed the biggest offensive of the war. In the first five hours of the great spring attack over a million shells were fired into British lines. In a conflict where success was measured in yards the Germans advanced 40 miles in a single day.

In his diary the secretary to the British war cabinet wrote: 'The Germans are fighting better than the Allies. I cannot exclude the possibility of disaster.' Haig made one last desperate rallying call: 'Every position must be held to the last man. There must be no retirement. With our backs to the wall, and believing in the justice of our cause we must all fight on till the end.'