

General headquarters.

Having visited the ball of Richmond, Wellington returned to his headquarters at the Hotel Royale where he slept for a few hours. Between 4 and 5 a.m. Von Dörnberg arrived from Mons reporting to the duke that there was no enemy's presence there, at least the moment he had left early that evening before. At least, he reported about Mons being in a state of defence and that the French had taken Lobbes and Thuin.¹

This information, plus the report as delivered by captain Webster, led Wellington to leave the city and see for himself about the situation in the sector of the road leading to Charleroi. Before he left Brussels however, he had Delancey a few orders. In this chronology it would mean that they were drafted somewhere between 5 and 6 a.m. They read:

16th June 1815

To general Lord Hill, G.C.B.

*The Duke of Wellington requests that you will move the 2nd division of infantry upon Braine le Comte immediately. The cavalry has been ordered likewise on Braine le Comte. His Grace is going to Waterloo.*²

And:

To general Lord Hill, G.C.B. 16th June 1815

*Your Lordship is requested to order Prince Frederick of Orange to move, immediately upon the receipt of this order, the 1st division of the army of the Low Countries, and the Indian brigade, from Sotteghem to Enghien, leaving 500 men, as before directed, in Audenaarde.*³

Wellington left Brussels around 6.15 a.m.⁴⁻⁵ While riding out from Brussels Wellington was escorted by a small group, of which at least baron Von Müffling and the duke of Brunswick took part.⁶

During the morning Wellington and Von Müffling learned again about the intention of the Prussians to accept a major battle in the position of Sombreffe. They had already done so by Blücher's letter of the 15th of June (noon), but it was probably when they were heading south that Von Müffling received the letter which was sent out around 11 p.m. by the Prussian general staff, indicating this intention again and asking for Wellington's intentions at the same time.⁷

After passing parts of the reserve in the forest of Soignes near Waterloo, it was somewhere between Mont Saint Jean and Plancenoit (it was towards 9 a.m.) that Wellington met the messenger who carried the report which the prince of Orange had put on paper at 7 a.m. It led the duke to order the reserve to proceed their march to Genappe, while he ordered the cavalry to Nivelles most probably at the same time (see below).⁸

It was near Genappe that Von Müffling met his adjutant Wucherer, whom he had sent out to Blücher around midnight. Yet, due to the French presence on the Namur-road, Wucherer had not been able to push through to Sombreffe and had returned where he had come from.⁹

Wellington himself arrived at Quatre Bras around 10 a.m.¹⁰ He visited the outposts, reconnoitred the French position⁽¹¹⁾ until about 11 a.m.⁽¹²⁾ and approved of the position the prince of Orange had taken up.¹³ Having done so, the duke then wrote to Blücher as an answer to the letter (dated 11 p.m. of the 15th of June) he had received some time earlier, asking him about his situation and his intentions. It reads:

On the heights behind Frasne, 16th June 1815 at 10.30 a.m.

My dear prince,

My army is situated as follows: the army corps of the prince of Orange has a division here and at Quatre Bras; and the rest at Nivelles. The reserve is in march from Waterloo towards Genappe, where it will arrive at noon. The British cavalry will be at Nivelles at the same time. The corps of Lord Hill is at Braine le Comte.

I do not see any large force of the enemy in front of us, and I await news from Your Highness and the arrival of troops in order to determine my operations for the day. Nothing has been seen on the side of Binche, nor on our right.

Your very obedient servant,

*Wellington*¹⁴

Taking the information as he had received it the other day, the letter was written in the presumption that Blücher was at Sombreffe. It may have been just before or after he wrote this letter that the duke spoke to major Von Brunneck (cf. chapter on the Prussian headquarters).¹⁵ Though he had written him one and half hour before, it was towards 12.15 o'clock that Wellington decided to go over to the Prussian general staff himself.¹⁶ What triggered him to do so remains unclear, however. It might have been the contact with Von Brunneck and / or the information he may have got from a Prussian patrol which had got as far as where the Anglo-Netherlands-German forces were.¹⁷

In taking the road leading from Nivelles to Namur, Wellington was at least accompanied by Von Müffling, Von Dörnberg, lord FitzRoy Somerset and some adjudants, escorted by some cavalry.¹⁸ Wellington arrived at the mill of Bussy, where the Prussian general staff could be found, around 1 p.m.¹⁹ From there, French columns could be seen moving, while some skirmishing took place between the outposts. For Wellington and Blücher it became clear: the French main army was moving against Blücher.²⁰⁻²¹⁻²²

A conversation (in French) started between Wellington and Von Müffling on the one hand, and Gneisenau and Grolman on the other. Blücher didn't join in as he could neither speak, nor understand any French.²³ After some 45 minutes, it became clear to both commanders that support from around Nivelles –as it was meant to be- wasn't realistic and that this could only come from Quatre Bras. This was in itself a matter of calculations in time and space, but in that case Wellington would bring up his forces from Quatre Bras over the Namur road towards the Prussian army as a reserve that afternoon.²⁴ After the conversation had come to an end, Wellington left. It was then about 2 p.m.²⁵

At Brussels, meanwhile, information about the situation dropped in to others who were connected to Wellington's headquarters, like general Tindal, the Netherlands liaison officer at Wellington's headquarters. He wrote somewhere that day, probably in the morning, to king Willem I:

“Sire !

Ik heb de eer Uwe Majesteit hiernevens aan te bieden een extract uit de bij mij op heden ontvangen confidentiële rapporten, waaruit het aan Hoogst Dezelve zal blijken, dat de Franschen op gisteren, den 15en dezes, de voorposten van de Pruisen bij Charleroy hebben gesurpreneerd en ten gevolg van dien tot Charleroy zijn doorgedrongen.

Uit deze rapporten moet ik opmaken, dat de ligne van de Pruisische [sic] armee aan die kant niet zeer op hare hoede is geweest; dan de mouvement welke ik heden in de troepen van de geallieerde mogendheden heb bespeurd, doen mij gelooven, dat onze positie wel haast weder hernomen zal zijn.

*Ik vermeen dat de maarschalk hertog van Wellington heden naar de armée is vertrokken.”*²⁶

Apparently, Tindal wasn't still yet informed by the time he wrote this report about the fact that the French had in fact penetrated as far as Frasnes. The reports he refers to are those mentioned and summarised in an annex, which comprises the reports from Basslé (3 a.m. 16th of June), those of Behr from Mons (see above) and one from the commanders at Ghent and Menin.²⁷

Whether Tindal had the chance to / did report to Wellington on these reports, before he had left from Brussels, remains unclear. From his position, the Austrian colonel Vincent wrote to prince Schwarzenberg that evening:

“Hier, 15, à cinq heures du matin, la ligne Prussienne sur la Sambre a été attaquée par les Français sur les points de Lobbes et de Thuin; l'ennemi a repliée les postes Prussiens sur Charleroi. Le général Ziethen qui commandoit ce corps s'y est rassemblée, mais pressé par l'ennemi, il a repassé la Sambre en y laissant un bataillon qui on a été délégué avec assez de perte; l'ennemi a suivi dans la direction de Bruxelles jusqu'à Quatre Bras où se croisent les chaussées de Charleroy à Bruxelles et celle de Namur à Nivelles. L'ennemi a poussé des patrouilles jusqu'à Genappe et à Sombreff [sic], ce qui a intercepté la nuit derrière la communication directe avec l'armée du maréchal Blücher, celui-ci a rassemblé depuis une partie de ses forces en avant de Sombreff [sic].

*Les circonstances déterminèrent le duc de Wellington de faire marcher sa réserve en avant de la forêt de Soignes et a rapproché de lui le corps du prince d'Orange, qui était à Braine le Compte [sic]; la matinée d'aujourd'hui a été tranquille, mais après midi vers 3 heures et demie s'est engagée dans la direction de Fleurus une affaire, qui à en juger par la vivacité du feu a été considérable et meurtrière, vers la fin du jour il s'est rallenti sensiblement; en s'éloignant sembloit-il vers la Sambre. Cette nuit je me transporterai vers les lieux parceque vraisemblablement la bataille s'engagera de nouveau. J'expédierai le comte de Saar en raison de ce qui aura lieu.”*²⁸

Colonel Von Washington, Bavarian representative in Wellington's staff wrote at 5 a.m. to prince Wrede [?]:

“Votre Altesse doit être informé par le prince Taxis que les hostilités ont commencées hier à 5 heures du matin.

On avait appris que Napoleon se trouvait à l'armée depuis le 12 et plusieurs mouvements que l'ennemi fit dans la journée d'avant hier en concentrant un nombre considérable des troupes à Bavay firent croire qu'il allait commencer ses aspirations; il s'en suivit une attaque générale sur les avants postes Prussiennes qui se replièrent en bon ordre sur les différents points qui leurs avaient été assignés. On dit Napoleon à Thuin, et qu'il a fait passer la Sambre à 40.000 hommes. On s'attend qu'aujourd'hui l'attaque sera renouvelé et menera à des résultats plus considérables. Ce ne fut qu'hier soir très tard que ces nouvelles me parvinrent, j'appris en même temps que le duc de Wellington [...] quitter Bruxelles dans la journée d'aujourd'hui. J'ai été d'abord chez le commandant du quartier général pour m'en avertir afin que je puisse suivre le duc là où il jugera à propos de se rendre. La réserve qui se trouvait ici, est parti cette nuit. Il y avait hier du soir un grand bal chez la duchesse de Richmond où le duc et un grand nombre de généraux se trouveraient encore. Le général Wurtembergeois de Hügel m'a dit qu'il n'a pu obtenir qu'un mois dans le traité de subsides qu'il vient de signer.

À 10 heures du matin

J'ai attendu le dernier moment du départ de la poste en cas que j'aurais eu encore quelque chose d'intéressant à ajouter à la présente. Tout que j'ai pu amasser est ce que suit:

Le duc de Wellington est allé à 7 heures aux avants postes pour voir ce que s'y passe. Il compte revenir cet après midi ou ce soir. Il paraît qu'il concentre une armée à Nivelles. Le maréchal Blücher en fait autant à Sombreuf [sic] où il a établi son quartier général. Tout porte à croire que dans quelques jours d'ici une bataille pourra être donnée, peut être dans la plaine de Fleurus, terrain très avantageux pour la superbe cavalerie des armées alliées. Les Français ont passées la Sambre à Lobbes et à Marchiennes au Pont et se soit portés en force sur Fontaine l'Evêque repoussant vivement un bataillon Prussien qui se trouvait sur son passage. Charleroy a été occupé par les Français en suite de ces mouvements. Napoleon avait fait venir de Mézières le corps d'armée du général Gérard pour opérer ces mouvements, un parc d'artillerie est également sorti des forteresses, preuves qu'il a une attaque en vue, il paraît que le maréchal Blücher ne s'attendait pas à être attaqué. Toute notre armée est en mouvement et des grands résultats peuvent en suivre incessamment.

Je ne manquerai pas de continuer aussi longtems que possible de tenir Votre Altesse au courant et de l'informer de ce qui se passe pour autant que je parviendrai de le savoir.”²⁹

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¹ Cf. the letter written by jonkheer L.A.B.Vrijthoff on the evening of the 15th of June; see above.

2.WD, p.474-475

3. HL, MS61 WP 8.2.4.

WD, p.474-475

Also in: Bas, F.de - Prins Frederik en zijn tijd. Vol.III, 2 p.1179

⁴ The least we can safely assume is that Wellington arrived at Quatre Bras around 10 a.m. as he wrote to Blücher at 10.30 a.m. and it can be assumed that he wrote it shortly after having inspected the situation. The distance between Brussel - Quatre Bras via Waterloo is 34 kilometres.

In addition, Wellington passed Waterloo just after the 5th division had halted here; this was around 8.15 a.m. and the distance between Brussels and Waterloo is 16 kilometres, which took him about 1 ³/₄ to 2 hours.

For Wellington's passage at Waterloo, cf.

Major Forbes (79th regiment). In: BL, Add.ms.34.703 p.1-2 and 34.706 p.314

Sergeant Robertson (92nd regiment). In: The journal of sergeant D.Robertson p.143

5. According to the assistant QMG colonel Hervey, Wellington left between 6 and 7 a.m. Cf. Hervey in a letter to Mr.Carroll (1815) in: Leeds, F. - A contemporary letter on the battle of Waterloo. Nineteenth Century 1893 p.432

Colonel Von Washington says it was by 7 a.m. that Wellington left Brussels. In his letter [to ?] dated 5 / 10 a.m. 16th of June. In: Königliches Bayerisches Kriegsarchiv, Munich. In: GSA, VPH-HA,VI nr.VIII.2.p.1-3

Baron Van der Capellen, in his report dated midnight of the 16th of June, indicates that Wellington had left Brussels towards 7 a.m. In: NA, 2.02.01 nr.6585

Wellington himself claims he left Brussels before daybreak (which was at 3.30 a.m.), but this cannot be correct. Cf. The Croker papers, Vol.III 1885 (2nd edition) p.175

A civilian traveler, a man called N.Smith, who was at Brussels on the 15th and 16th of June 1815, states the duke left the city at 6 a.m. In: Flying sketches of the battle of Waterloo etc. p.24

Others say it was 5 a.m., but at that time Wellington was in Brussels. Cf.

Von Müffling. In: The memoirs of baron Von Müffling etc. p.230

And in a letter written to general Von Hofmann. In: Hofmann, G.W.von - Zur Geschichte etc. p.131

Navez, L. - La campagne de 1815 Vol.I p.136

Von Müffling In: WSD Vol.X, p.510

And in: Passages from my life p.230

For 7 a.m. see:

Glover, M. - Wellington as a military commander p.198

Von Pflugk Hartung. In: Vorgeschichte etc. p.125

An anonymous witness says it was after 7 a.m. Cf. Waterloo the day after the battle. By an eyewitness. In: With fife and drum p.4

Ropes claims it was 7.30 a.m. Cf. Ropes, J.C. - The Waterloo campaign. p.105

Others say it was at 8 a.m. Cf.

Lord FitzRoy Somerset. In: BL, Add.ms.34.707 p.484-485 and in his account in the NAM, nr.6507-1

Eaton, Ch.A. - Narrative of a residence in Belgium during the campaign of 1815 etc. p.49

Prokesch-Osten, A.von - Die Schlachten etc.p .22

According to lady H.Dalrymple Wellington left Brussels at 8 a.m. Cf. Maxwell, H. - The life of Wellington. Vol.II p.13

E.Heeley (assistant of general Scovell) states that the general staff of the army left Brussel just after the first units of the 5th division had left. This may count for 5 or 6 a.m. but this does not mean that Wellington left then as well. Cf. his journal. In: NAM, nr.8409-98

According to surgeon James (1st Life Guards) Wellington left at 7 a.m. Cf. his letter from Brussels of 29th June 1815 to R.James. In: Barnsley, R.E. A medical man at Waterloo, JSAHR, nr.124

And in file nr.394 of the Royal Army medical Corps in the Wellcome Institute in London.

Wellington's cook, James Thornton, claims the Duke left Brussels at 10 a.m. In": Your most obedient servant p.95

He also informs us that he had orders of Sir C.Campbell to send a basket of cold provisions in the afternoon to Genappe; shortly after, the butler was sent out with these provisions.

6. Von Müffling. In: WSD, Vol.X, p.510.

Colonel Von Herzberg, of the Brunswick general staff. In: BL, Add.ms.34.706.11

Sir Augustus Frazer, commander of the Royal Horse Artillery, also left Brussels that morning but it is not sure whether he was with Wellington as well. Cf. Sabine, E. - Letters of Sir A.Frazer (letter nrs.XX and XXI, p.536-540.

⁷ Von Müffling himself writes, having mentioned his arrival at Quatre Bras, "As the enemy remained quietly, and intelligence had meanwhile reached me that the Prussians army was assembling at Ligny, etc." – it is probably here that he refers to the letter involved. In: The memoirs of baron Von Müffling etc. p.230

Cf. Pflugk Harttung, J.von - Vorgeschichte etc. p.64 and in: Die Vorgeschichte der Schlacht bei Quatre Bras p.205

⁸ Cf. Colonel Von Herzberg (of the Brunswick general staff) believes he did so at or near Genappe, but this is not possible in relation to the letter Wellington wrote at 10.30 a.m. In: BL, Add.ms..34.706.11

Hofschröer believes Wellington ordered part of the reserve to Quatre Bras at 11 a.m. In: 1815. The Waterloo campaign. Wellington etc. p.233

⁹ Von Müffling in his letter to Hofmann. In: Hofmann, G. - Zur Geschichte etc. p.131

10. Wellington to Croker, d.d. 28th January 1845. In: The Croker Papers, Vol.III 1885 (2nd edition) p.175

Constant Rebecque. In: NA, 2.21.008.01 nr.25

Lord FitzRoy Somerset. In: NAM, nr.6507-1

Cf. Hofschröer, P. - 1815. The Waterloo campaign. Wellington etc. p.223

Hamilton-Williams, D. - Waterloo, new perspectives. p.190

Houssaye, H. - 1815.Waterloo p.155

Charras - Histoire de la campagne de 1815 Vol. I p.192

Von Damitz - Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.201

Van Zuylen van Nijevelt says it was 9 a.m. In: Historisch verhaal etc. In: Bas, F.de - La campagne de 1815 Vol.III p.308

Cf.

Von Pflugk Harttung thinks it was between 9.30 and 10 a.m. Cf. Pflugk Harttung, J.von. In: GSA, VPH-HA VI,II.12.p.141 and in: Vorgeschichte etc. p.125

The following sources give 11 a.m.:

Von Müffling – The memoirs of baron Von Müffling etc. p.230

Von Müffling In: WSD.Vol.X, p.510 and as CvW, in Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.9

Colonel Oldfield (engineers) claims it was between 11 and 12 a.m. In: NAM, nr.7403-147

Major count Van Limburg Stirum thinks it was 10.30 a.m. In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302, inv.nr.265

11. Captain Von Gagern. In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302, inv.nr.265

CvW. In: Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.9

¹² Life of lord Raglan, p.22

13. Wellington himself mentions his meeting with the prince and the presence of the Netherlands troops. Cf. the Croker Papers, Vol.III p.173

Also see count Van Limburg Stirum. In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302, inv.nr.265

Cf. CvW - Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.9

14. Original in KA. VI.E.nr.3 Vol.II p. ?

It was published for the first time in the Militär Wochenblatt of December 1852 (no paging) and was published in fascimilé by Von Ollech in 1876. In: Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.124

Some people read “Je ne vois pas beaucoup de l'ennemi en avant de vous” instead of ”nous” at the end. Apart from the fact that Wellington couldn't see anything of the French forces in front of Blücher (see below), and that his “v” is really clear in other places of this letter. In the word “ni” in the same letter the “n” clearly comes out as an “n”, similar to the one here. Cf. Von Pflugk Harttung. In: GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.II.12.p.123

In this respect, the issue whether Wellington could actually see what was happening on the field of Ligny should be settled once and for all: referring to the research carried out by captain White the conclusion is that this was impossible, not only because of the distance but also because of the heights and the wood of Delhütte in between. Cf. Captain White to Siborne. In: BL, Add.ms.34.708 p.202-204

Cf. sergeant Cotton, In: BL, Add.ms.34.708 p.208-209 and W. Aerts. In: Etudes etc. Livre IV (manuscript) p.109

According to Cotton the church tower and mill of Marbais could be seen from Quatre Bras, but the village of Marbais itself not. Further, Marbais, of course, was not a part of the battlefield of Ligny either.

The “Frasnes-letter” is regarded by Hofschröer as one of the few “missing” (and to Wellington compromising) letters. In this context, a clear distinction should be made between letters / documents which are “unavailable” and “missing”, a distinction which is not to be found in his list. Here, documents are listed which are actually fully unavailable in the sense that their literal

content is unknown and also those of which the text is known, but their whereabouts is unknown. The Frasnes-letter clearly belongs to this second category, as the original in fascimilé is available through Von Ollech. The fact that it is missing from the files is that it simply once was in the Prussian war-archives, presumed to have been destroyed during world war 2. In that sense, the missing as such has nothing to do with any possible compromising of Wellington, as suggested by Hofschröer. He also uses the words “nous” and “notre” (in translation) as “you” and “your”. In: 1815. The Waterloo campaign. Wellington p.233, 367

¹⁵ The reason that Von Brunneck did not report about this conversation is that by the time that he spoke to the duke, Von Brunneck had already despatched his (second) report.

16. According to FitzRoy Somerset it was between 11 and 12 a.m. Cf. his account. In: NAM, Book of manuscript copies of Waterloo letters. Nr.6507-1

According to major count Van Limburg Stirum it was noon. In: NL-ZuRAZ, Van Löben Sels, 0302, inv.nr.265

Cf. Navez, L. - La campagne de 1815 Vol.I p.136

Ropes, J.C. - The Waterloo campaign p.108

¹⁷ Cf. Von Dörnberg. In: Pflugk Harttung, J.von - Vorgeschichte etc. p.293

The possibility there would have been such a patrol near Villers Peruin, and which would have been in touch with the Anglo-Netherlands-German units at Quatre Bras should not be excluded. Das Tagebuch des königlich etc. In: GSA. VPH-HA, VI,nr.VII nr.3a p.26-27

18.Von Dörnberg. In: Pflugk Harttung, J.von - Vorgeschichte etc. p.293

Von Müffling. In: WSD, Vol.X,p.510

Von Müffling – The memoirs of baron von Müffling etc. p.230

Lord FitzRoy mentions the meeting, and probably was a witness but not a participant. By the way, he mentions “ a small escort of cavalry”, without specifying which.

Lord FitzRoy situates the meeting at Battij St.Croix, a chapel about 750 metres east of the mill of Bussy. In: NAM, Book of manuscript copies of Waterloo letters, nr.6507-1

Cf. Hofschröer, P. - 1815. The Waterloo campaign. Wellington etc. p.239 He cites from the Raglan papers, A 24-31 nr.707.186

Cf.FitzRoy Somerset. In: BL. Add.ms.34.707 p.484-485

Sometimes it is asserted that the duke of Brunswick was a member of the group escorting Wellington, but at that time he was with his troops.

Hamilton-Williams mentions the hussars of lieutenant Sellin, but this is incorrect. Cf. report of Sellin himself. In: GSA. VPH-HA.VI, nr.VII.3b.p.25

In: Waterloo, new perspectives. p.191

19.Cf. Colonel Hardinge, cited by Gurwood in a footnote at the memorandum of Wellington. In: WSD. Vol. X, p.513-531

Lieutenant Von Gerlach, of the general Prussian headquarters, in his diary. In: Aus den Jahren Preussischer Not etc. p.148 Von Gerlach adds that he didn't hear the conversation.

Nostitz, Von Das Tagebuch etc. p.23

Cf. Damitz, Von - Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. Vol.I p.117-118

Die Geschichte des 28.Regiments. In: Special ABN, nr.65 p.19

Reiche, L.von - Memoiren etc. p.182

Pflugk Harttung, J.von. In: GSA, VPH-HA VI, nr.II.12.p.152, nr.III.3.p.19

Grouchy, G.de - Mémoires du maréchal Grouchy. Vol.IV p.8

Delbrück, H. - Das Leben des Feldmarshalls Grafen Neithardt von Gneisenau Vol.IV, p.371

²⁰ It struck lieutenant Von Gerlach (of the general Prussian headquarters) that Wellington used his spyglass very much during his presence at the Prussian headquarters. Cf. his diary. In: Aus den Jahren Preussischer Not etc. p.146

21. After Wellington had briefly studied the Prussian position, he “gave his opinion to Gneisenau as to the defective mode of occupying the position”. Cf. Hardinge in his letter dated 20th July 1838 to colonel Gurwood. In: HL, MS61 WP 7.2.21

In this letter, Hardinge doesn't further explain this, nor does he give any reaction of the Prussian leadership to this criticism. Other documents confirm that Wellington would have told the Prussian staff he thought the troops were too much in the open and vulnerable for French artillery fire; this remark didn't fall into fertile ground to the Prussian staff and they said it was the normal use in the army.

Cf. Notes on conversations with the duke of Wellington, by lady De Ros. In: Maxwell's Life of Wellington Vol.II p.19-20

Colonel Hardinge. In: Stanhope, Ph.H. - Notes of conversations with the duke of Wellington etc., citing Hardinge from a conversation between the duke, the earl of Stanhope and Hardinge himself, dated 26th of October 1837

A conversation between the duke and the earl of Ellesmere, dating 25th September 1851. In: Stafford, A. (ed) - Personal reminiscences etc. p.191 ff. - as cited by: Hofschöer, P. - 1815. The Waterloo campaign etc. Vol.I p.344

Hofschröer has his strong doubts whether Wellington has expressed this criticism at all. In this, he also refers to the Memorandum as written by Wellington in 1842 and which was written in an atmosphere of friction, particularly with Von Clausewitz and Von Grolmann. The duke could then easily have used it, but he didn't.

Apart from that, Lord FitzRoy Somerset, who was there, writes about it but without giving any judgement of value; it merely is a short description of the Prussian position. He writes: “The Prussian troops were formed in close column on the heights in rear of St.Amand and Ligny, which were occupied, and the left of the Prussian army extended beyond Sombreffe.”

Cf. Hofschöer, P. - 1815. The Waterloo campaign. Wellington etc. p.239-241, 343-344

It may have been that Wellington actually did criticize the Prussian positions, but this is still an open question, the more as there are no Prussians referring to such a statement as done by the Duke.

²² There is no proof that members of both Blücher's and Wellington's staff actually used the mill itself to observe the French. This type of mill did not have a balustrade around, but contained just a door and a large opening above it in its rear (but which could obviously be turned towards the French).

²³ Nostitz, Von - Das Tagebuch etc. p.23

²⁴ Cf. extensive note.

25. Cf. Pflugk Harttung, J.von In: GSA, VI-HA,nr.III.1.p.36
Von Reiche says it was shortly after 2 p.m. In: Memoiren etc. p.184
Von Damitz claims it was 1.45 p.m. In: Geschichte des Feldzugs etc. p.117
Von Nostitz erroneously believes it was 3 p.m. In: Das Tagebuch etc. p.23

Lieutenant Von Gerlach, of the Prussian general headquarters, believed the conversation lasted only half an hour. Cf. his diary. In: Aus den Jahren Preussischer Not etc. p.148

²⁶ In: NA, 2.02.01. nr.6585
Also in: Bas, F.de - Prins Frederik etc. Vol.III p.1164
And in: GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.I nr.1

²⁷ NA, nr.2.02.01 nr.6585
The summary of the one from lieutenant general Marthusewitz, at Ghent, reads:
“Par lettre du 15 Juin, le lieutenant général Martuchewitz, gouverneur de Gand, annonce que les Francais ont coupé le pont de Wattlelos près de Roubais et ont commencé dans la matinée du 18 [?] à faire des abatis d’arbres entre Moucron & Turiving [?]; 100 pionniers ont été commandés dans cette commune autant à Roubaix.”
And the one from Menin reads: “ Par lettre du commandant de Menin on est informé que sa position est toujours la même qu’il n’a rien de nouveau à annoncer.” Whether Wellington could have taken in this information before he left Brussels can be doubted upon.

²⁸ In: GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VIII p.35-36 - copy files from Kriegsarchiv at Vienna.

²⁹ In: GSA, VPH-HA, VI nr.VIII.2. p.1-3 - copy files from Königliches Bayerisches Kriegsarchiv, Munich.