took the keenest interest in India and Indian troops, and it was to greet our Indian forces in the field that he made the journey which was to be his last. After a term of command in Ireland, Lord Roberts was selected in a moment of emergency to lead the forces fighting in South Africa. He took with him the confidence of the whole nation, and, notwithstanding his heavy sorrow at the loss of his only son, justified it by the masterly and soldierlike manner in which he carried out the difficult problems of that campaign. On his return from South Africa he became Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, and in that capacity was able to inculcate those lessons of the South African War which we may see bearing fruit on the hard-fought fields in France and Belgium. On vacating that office at an age when other men might have looked forward to spending in well-earned leisure the evening of a glorious day, he was not content to abandon his lifelong work for the Army. Anything that would seem to benefit the military forces of the Crown or to promote the welfare of officers and men claimed his energetic support and his untiring advocacy.

When the present war broke out all his thoughts, as I know well, were for the troops in the field, which, but for his age, he would have undoubtedly either directed or commanded. His indomitable spirit led him, in spite of his weight of years, to face the discomforts of a journey to the Army in France, and, although he died on this mission of encouragement to those of whom no small number had served under him before, he would himself, I feel sure, have wished for no happier end than to pass away, the greatest soldier of our day, in the midst of the greatest Army the Empire has ever put into the field, with the sound of the shells and the cheers of his comrades still ringing in his ears. Lord Roberts's reputation as a soldier stands secure, and no words of mine are needed to praise him. He was one of the most tried and proven leaders of men the British race has ever produced, and the country at the present crisis can ill afford to lose the services of so eminent a military adviser. It has fallen to my lot as Secretary of State for War to attempt to give expression to the sense of affectionate veneration and high esteem with which the Army regarded the late Field-Marshal, for whom, as my old chief, I entertain feelings upon which I cannot expatiate here. I, more than most men, had occasion to learn and admire his qualities of head and heart; his ripe experience and sage counsel were fully and freely offered to me to the end. To us soldiers, the record of his life will ever be a cherished possession. We mourn his loss, but hope to profit by his illustrious example. (Hear, hear.)

LORD CURZON'S TRIBUTE.

EARL CURZON of KEDLESTON.—The noble marquess who leads the Opposition greatly regrets his continued absence from this House, and never more so, as he has asked me to say, than this afternoon. He would have liked to be present here to bear his part in the tributes that are being paid to the illustrious Field-Marshal who has just passed away in the golden sunset of a glorious life. The Secretary for War has portrayed to us some of those qualities which ensured the remarkable success of Lord Roberts both as a commander of troops and as a leader of men. A general who never knew defeat, who more than once retrieved the trembling fortunes of armies, and who conducted great operations on large fields of warfare with an amazing rapidity and an astonishing success, must have possessed rare gifts of foresight, insight, patience, resolution, and courage. But there was another aspect in which Lord Roberts excelled as a leader of men. That was his extraordinary understanding of the soldier. By some sort of instinct he knew what were the soldier's wants and desires. He was not merely the commander of the troops, but their comrade, and hence he was more loved than any commander in modern and, I dare say, in ancient times. Especially was this true in regard to the Indian soldiers. He spent half of his long life in the service of India, and his greatest military achievements were won either inside India or just outside its frontiers. He was really the embodiment of the finest traditions of Indian service and might almost himself be called the incarnate spirit of the Indian Army. How fitting it was that having gone out to visit and encourage the Indian troops whom he so often led to victory he should have laid down his life almost in contact with them and in sight of the battlefield. *Felix opportunitate mortis* is the hackneyed but inevitable quotation that leaps to the lips when we pay our tribute to the great man who has gone, for his title is beyond all dispute. The fullest justice to Lord Roberts's fame as a soldier has been done in this House and also outside by the unanimous voice of the country. As it happens, I have witnessed as a civilian assessor a number of those discussions to which the noble earl opposite made some allusion connected with the defence of the country in which Lord Roberts played so conspicuous a part, and I like to recall the distinguished courtesy with which Lord Roberts always advanced his arguments, his freedom from any tinge of bitterness in reply, and his refusal to attribute any ill motive to any opponent. It is something of a happy accident that the three speakers have all been in different capacities officially connected with India, because India will long mourn Lord Roberts as she will mourn no other man who is now alive. The Indian Army will always, I am sure, cherish the thought that his last visit was paid to them in their days of stress. The imagination is kindled by the picture of a great commander dying in the arms of victory like a Gustavus Adolphus or a Nelson, but emotions not less real are stirred by the spectacle of an honoured leader, full of years, passing away in the midst of the soldiers to whom for years past his example has been a guiding star, and to whom the thought of his presence in his last days will remain an enduring inspiration. I desire, on behalf of this House, to convey our most respectful tribute of sympathy to the lady who for five and fifty years has been the partner and stay of Lord Roberts's life, and to the family who are left behind to mourn his loss.

The House rose at 5 o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at a quarter to 3 o'clock.

YOUNG UNMARRIED MEN.

In answer to Mr. FELL (Great Yarmouth, Opp.),

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL (Yorkshire, Cleveland) said that, as far as could be estimated, there were in the United Kingdom 2,600,000 unmarried men between 20 and 30 years of age.

THE PRINCE OF LIECHTENSTEIN.

In answer to SIR J. JARDINE (Roxburghshire, Min.),

SIR E. GREY (Northumberland, Berwick) said:—I am informed by the United States Ambassador that the Sovereign Principality of Liechtenstein considers itself neutral in the present hostilities. No prohibition of commercial or other dealings with the subjects of the Prince has been published.

SIR J. JARDINE asked whether publicity could be given to the right hon. gentleman's statement, as one of the enemy papers had said that this peaceful and friendly prince was at war.

The SPEAKER.—We do not pay any attention to enemy papers here. (Laughter.)

MINING OF THE NORTH SEA.

GREAT BRITAIN AND NEUTRAL TRADE.

SIR G. PARKER (Gravesend, Opp.) asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the anxiety of public opinion in the United States with regard to the search for belligerent reservists in American vessels, the declaration of oil and copper as contraband, and the mining of the North Sea, he would make a general explanatory statement of the policy of his Majesty's Government on these subjects.

Mr. ASQUITH (Fife, E.).—I will deal in turn with each of the matters referred to in the question:—

(1) ENEMY RESERVISTS.

In view of the action taken by the German forces in Belgium and France, where they have arrested and removed as prisoners of war all male inhabitants of military age, his Majesty's Government have found it necessary to give instructions that all enemy subjects liable to military service who may be found on board neutral vessels shall be made prisoners of war. This instruction applies to neutral vessels under whatever flag. As a matter of fact, no case has, so far as I am aware, occurred where enemy reservists have been found in United States ships.

(2) OIL AND COPPER.

As regards oil and copper his Majesty's Government have reliable information that in the present circumstances any oil, copper, and certain other substances that may be imported into Germany or Austria will certainly be used exclusively for warlike purposes, and his Majesty's Government have for this reason felt justified in adding those items to the list of absolute contraband. (Cheers.) Every possible care is being taken to ensure that oil and copper *bona fide* intended who was charged with being in possession of wireless telegraphic apparatus, he being an employee of Messrs. Siemens and an unregistered alien, he understood that a trial by Court-martial was being held.

TO-MORROW'S BUSINESS.

In answer to LORD E. TALBOT (Sussex, Chichester, Opp.),

Mr. ASQUITH said that at the next day's sitting it was proposed to take the motion for the appointment of a Committee on Pensions.

PROPOSED MONUMENT TO LORD ROBERTS.

MR. ASQUITH'S TRIBUTE.

Mr. ASQUITH moved:—

That this House will, upon Monday next, resolve itself into a Committee to consider an humble Address to his Majesty, praying that his Majesty will give directions that a monument be erected at the public charge to the memory of the late Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, with an inscription expressing the admiration of this House for his illustrious military career and its gratitude for his devoted services to the State.

He said the British Empire experienced a sense of personal loss for which it was wholly unprepared when it realized that death had suddenly taken from us the oldest and the most illustrious of our soldiers. Lord Roberts, an Irishman by race and blood, born in India of a distinguished military stock, educated here in England, entered the Indian Army when he was still little more than a boy, won the Victoria Cross in the Mutiny, and fought his way step by step, unaided by any influence, except his own valour and skill, to the highest place in the famous force to which he gave the best years of his life.

DARING AND SKILL.

During the 40 years which he spent in the service of the Company and of the Crown in our great Dependency there was from the first no hazard which he did not encounter and no daring adventure in which he was not in the front, and in his maturer days there was no campaign in which he did not stand out from among his contemporaries by his consummate strategy, his rare powers of leadership, his unique faculty of attracting the devotion of his men (cheers), and his mastery both of the service and the practice of the art of war. Crowned with honours and distinctions, he came home with every title to enjoy during the remainder of his life a well-earned and glorious repose, but he never allowed the sword which had won victory for his country and fame for himself to rest in its scabbard. He was well past the age of 60 when he was called in a moment of national emergency to recover ground which had been lost and to re-establish the prowess of our arms in South Africa. I will not presume to pass a judgment upon his military qualities and achievements, but I am confident that I am not going a step in advance of the ultimate verdict of history when I say that he takes a high and undisputed place amongst our greatest British captains—as our poet says, "on Fame's eternal head-roll worthy to be found." Nor did he when he retired from the active service of the State resign himself to an old age of lethargy and ease. His vivid and ardent spirit, his devoted and untiring patriotism were still alert and alive with a fervent energy which age could not dim or daunt.

"LAST TALK" WITH MR. ASQUITH.

I recall the last talk I had with him only two or three weeks ago, when he pressed upon me his desire to be of use in whatever capacity (cheers) in this latest and greatest of our wars. To the end he was not only wishing but working for the success of our arms. (Cheers.) Death came to him at last where we may well believe had the choice been his he would have elected to die. (Cheers.) Fresh from reviewing the Indian regiment to whom his name and fame are a watchword and an inheritance, saluted as he passed away with the distant roar of the artillery, which falls, we may well believe, like noble music upon the ears of the dying warrior, and almost within sight of the trenches held by his old comrades in arms with the same dauntless heroism which he himself had so often inspired and led to victory, he could well say, "Nunc Dimittis."

OPPOSITION LEADER'S TRIBUTE.

Mr. BONAR LAW.—I regard it as a great honour to second the resolution which has been proposed in words which command the sympathy of the whole House, and will command the sympathy of the whole nation. For a generation Lord Roberts has stood