

Selected Articles.

REGARDING SERA.

In the *Journal of the American Medical Association* for 22nd January there appeared a series of articles on the important subject of sera. Synopses of these papers are here given:

FEDERAL CONTROL OF SERUMS, VACCINES, ETC.

The law passed by Congress regulating the interstate trade in therapeutic serums, vaccines, etc., passed seven years ago, is explained and its working described by M. J. Rosenau, Washington, D.C. It provides for a complete system of governmental supervision over the establishments producing vaccines, viruses, serums, toxins, antitoxins, and analogous products. This oversight consists in inspections, licenses and methods of control or testing in the governmental hygienic laboratory. The law requires the proper labeling of the product with its correct name, with the name, license number and address of the manufacturer, and the date beyond which the article cannot be expected to be effective. It also provides penalties of fine or imprisonment and revocation of license for violation of its provisions. This supervision only applies, it must be understood, to interstate traffic in these articles. Before the law was passed it was found that irresponsible persons were making and marketing biologic products without sufficient care or knowledge to insure safety and reliability. Four of these firms were at once refused licenses and went out of business and the applications of others since have been refused for the same reasons. Most of the remainder have been required to modify their establishments or to improve their methods to bring them up to the government standards. Since the law was adopted there has been great improvement in the potency and safety of the products and it has been enforced without fear or favor. In general, the manufacturers have reached a high state of efficiency. The inspections are made at least once a year and oftener when necessary and include a very searching inquiry into the methods, the personelle, and the efficiency of the equipment. Foreign establishments have to undergo the same inspection before their products are admitted for sale into the United States. The license is issued by the Secretary of the Treasury for the manufacture of a specific product. General licenses, authorizing the manufacture of more than one biologic product, are not permitted. The government does not guarantee the efficacy of the product. Some serums of as yet unproved efficacy are given