

ANTI-DIPHTHERITIC SERUM AND TETANUS.

In St. Louis, Mo., there has occurred (Oct. 26th—Nov. 16th), what can only be termed an unfortunate accident resulting in the death of fifteen children by the use of diphtheria antitoxin containing tetanus toxin. The blame rests upon the bacteriological division of the St. Louis Board of Health, and the circumstances so far gathered are as follows:—A horse was bled on August 24th and again on September 30th to obtain the serum. On October 2nd the horse developed tetanus and the serum of Sept. 30th was supposed to have been all destroyed. However, some of it (untested), was accidentally sent out labelled as serum of August 24th, and it was this serum which gave rise to the tetanus. The tetanus toxin is the most virulent poison known, as $\frac{1}{175}$ th to $\frac{1}{250}$ th grain is sufficient to kill a man of 165 pounds. Of course if this serum of September 30th had been tested as all such serums are and not accidentally used as serum of previous bleeding, then its toxin bearing qualities would have been discovered by its effects on the experimental animals. The medical profession can put every confidence in the antitoxic serum ordinarily on the market as all such serums are carefully selected and tested, and this one accident, though terrible in its results, will but lead if possible to greater care in the preparation of such serums.

At the meeting of the executive officers of Health Association of Ontario, at Brantford, in June last, the following resolution was adopted on motion of Drs. Coventry and Hutchison:—
 “That in view of the widespread dissatisfaction during the past two years, felt by the medical profession, in the use of vaccine, it is desirable to investigate the cause of its failure in a large proportion of cases. An extended report on this subject having the endorsement of the association, would confer a benefit on the profession at large, and the president is hereby authorized to name such a committee to report at the next annual meeting.”

In accordance with this resolution the President, Dr. Kitchen, named the following committee: Dr. W. T. Connell of Kingston, Chairman; Drs. Amyot and Shuttleworth of Toronto, Dr. Franks of Brantford, and Coventry of Windsor.