

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TUBERCULOSIS.

DURING the Session of Parliament of last year, as many of our readers know, the editor of this JOURNAL brought before the Agricultural Committee of the House the subject of tuberculosis in cattle and the probability that this disease may be transmitted from cattle, especially from cows, by means of the flesh, milk and butter, to the human organism. A special committee was at that time appointed by the Agricultural Committee to investigate the question. On April the 19th inst., the special committee presented their report. The committee had held a number of meetings last year and had decided that information should be sought, and for this purpose three sets of questions were sent out, soliciting answers. One thousand four hundred and eighty questions were sent out to medical gentlemen engaged in active practice, to which 215 replies were received. Two hundred and twenty-eight questions were sent to veterinary surgeons and 42 replies were received. Two hundred and eighty-four were sent to farmers and 134 replies received.

Information was also obtained from England, Maine and Massachusetts. In England a departmental Committee, under the authority the Privy Council of Great Britain, was sitting during 1888 to investigate the nature and extent of both pleuro-pneumonia and tuberculosis.

From careful analysis of the replies or reports of the medical practitioners it is ascertained that : They believe that from 10 to 50 per cent. of the cases of disease and premature death might be prevented by judicious sanitary measures ; that consumption is contagious and infectious, and isolation would assist in prevention, but that the chief preventible causes of disease are contagion, impure air and water, unhealthy diet, decaying animal and vegetable matter, bad drainage, general want of cleanliness and sudden changes of temperature. Some report glanders as having been communicated from horses to men, others mention skin diseases and a few express the opinion that tuberculosis may be transmitted to the human system, as well as diphtheria, by the medium of im-

pure milk and meat : but few have met with actual cases in their own experience of disease being so communicated.

The farmers reply that in the main they have very little knowledge of contagious diseases existing, although they mention a few cases. They express belief that cattle of improved breeds, being esteemed more valuable, are more confined and consequently more delicate. There is next to no experience mentioned as to the use of diseased meat or milk, in fact there is hardly a single reply to the enquiry whether the milk or flesh of animals whose lungs or liver have been found affected have been known to be used for food with bad results. This suggests that but few know or observe whether these organs are diseased.

The veterinary surgeons generally report that in their practice they have seen occasional cases of tuberculosis.

A few consider that the meat and milk of diseased animals should not be used.

CONCLUSIONS REACHED.

The special committee, from the foregoing evidence enumerated, are decidedly of opinion that the disease known as tuberculosis exists to a much greater extent than has been generally recognized. In the United Kingdom and in Europe preventive legislation has been most strongly urged. The very reference of the enquiry into these diseases to a departmental committee of the Privy Council in Great Britain shows how serious the danger is considered and the necessity for steps to arrest its increase, although it is deemed almost impracticable to attempt to eradicate it, and legislation pointing to the isolation and destruction of herds, with compensation to the owners, is advised and contemplated. In the State of Maine this action was actually taken in the case of the herd of cattle owned by the State at the State College, Orono, referred in a previous number of this JOURNAL. In Massachusetts public attention has been directed towards this serious state of affairs by the directors of the State Agricultural College, and Professor Farnald in a paper, warns the community that the disease is intercom-