

JAPANESE TO LIFT QUALITY OF PEARLS

Chicago Importer Declares the
Government Will Enforce
Law for Better Gems

By **GEORGE AUERBACH**

The cultured pearls of poor quality that are being exported by Japan probably will disappear from the market or diminish in quantity within the next three months, Joseph Goldstone, president of the Imperial Pearl Syndicate, Chicago, said in an interview last week. Many inferior pearls with streaks and blemishes are reaching this country because the Japanese grower cannot afford to wait the three to five years required to produce quality pearls.

Japan can increase its export of pearls 50 per cent over the \$4,500,000 shipped last year if the farmers allow the oysters to remain in the beds until the pearls mature, Mr. Goldstone said. A law passed last spring requiring the inspection by the Japanese Government of all cultured pearls destined for export can force the growers to harvest only the mature gems, he explained.

At present the law is not being enforced and all pearls are approved providing the inspection fee is paid, Mr. Goldstone said on his return from a three-week business trip in Japan. This law will be enforced in the near future through the insistence of American dealers, he continued.

Better Grade to Spur Sales

The Japanese growers will receive more money for the high quality pearls, and the market for the better grade will increase here, Mr. Goldstone contended. Japan is the only major source of cultured pearls and with the inexpensive, immature gems out of the market the public will buy the better grade.

"As the quality improves and the price cleft between the synthetic and cultured pearls widens, there will be a greater demand for quality gems in high fashion circles," Mr. Goldstone said. "It will take a few years before a supply of the large quality pearls can be grown, but until the law is enforced there is little likelihood of the farmers permitting the proper growth."

The effect of the law would be to wipe out the \$10 to \$35 range of cultured pearl necklaces giving the Japanese farmers, the importers and the retailers a greater dollar volume in sales. With the low neckline dresses continuing popular, there is little chance of the demand for pearls falling off, he forecast.

Big Christmas Sale Seen

Christmas sales of cultured pearls should be the best in the history of the industry, David Goldstone, vice president of the company, predicted. One of the reasons for the increase is that the French fashion leaders are using pearls as accessories for their dresses.

Among the items expected to be exceptionally popular are one and two-strand necklaces, double-strand chokers, drop earrings with diamonds or single pearl earrings with one diamond and three-row bracelets with jewel clasps, Mr. Goldstone asserted.

One of the main factors that has been hurting the industry is the misleading advertising of pearls, he said. Many stores are running announcements of drastic sales in cultured pearls often using fictitious high prices for comparison.

These practices have been prohibited under the Federal Trade Commission rules for the pearl industry adopted at the beginning of the year. About fifty violations were called to the attention of the commission, but to date it appears that they have not been enforced, Mr. Goldstone said.