

THEY LOVE PEARLS

Not Diamonds, but Oysters Are a Girls Best Friend

CHICAGO (UPI)—A girl's best friend is the oyster, according to the Imperial Pearl Syndicate, Inc.

"Women wear diamonds to impress others, pearls because they love them," said Lee Barnett, culture pearl expert for the Syndicate, which showed fabulous gems at the recent convention of the Retail Jewelers of America.

There was a \$250,000 tiara of Oriental pearls and diamonds set in platinum. It was made "to show everything an oyster can do," Barnett said.

Gems in the tiara range from the

dome-shaped "Star of the Celebes" in the center, to perfectly shaped milk-white, gray, blue ("black"), and golden pearls. South American customers demand the golden which Barnett said are a drug on the market in the United States.

A 300-carat pearl was valued at \$100,000. The Dowager Empress Tzu-Hsi of the Chiang Dynasty wore it on a slender chain around her neck as a good luck amulet, Barnett said.

Culture pearls also were displayed. It takes an X-ray to tell the difference between these and Oriental pearls, Barnett said.