

## MARKING IMPORTS.

12/17/39

The British House of Commons has given first reading to a bill introduced by a Labor member to amend the Merchandise Marks Act, the purpose being to have all imported foreign commodities marked in each instance with the name of the country of origin. At the same time the President of the Board of Trade is dealing with a large importation of Japanese salmon, marked in a misleading way, with a view to having the product adequately marked before it is passed on to the retail market. It appears that under the present law, which was enacted in 1926, the word "foreign" on the container of an imported commodity is sufficient, the result being that goods of German, Italian or Japanese origin cannot be distinguished as such and the consumer in the United Kingdom has no means of knowing whether he is buying a German or Japanese or Italian product or one from an Empire country. A recent consignment of Japanese salmon is said to have been marked with the letters "C. A. N.", the apparent purpose being to suggest that the fish came from Canada and were packed in this country. The House of Commons was told that the law under present conditions seems to favor Germany, Italy and Japan, and "enables them to sell goods here under false pretenses."

Although this bill is sponsored by a private member there seems strong likelihood of its acceptance by the government and its adoption by Parliament. It is an eminently proper measure, having regard to the general attitude of the British consumer toward the three foreign countries named, an attitude thoroughly justified by the actions of those countries and their treatment of Britain and Britain's interests. The public inclination is to boycott the products of these countries but the consumer cannot act upon that inclination if he is tricked into believing that he is buying an Empire product when in fact it has come from Japan or Italy or Germany. The same inclination is very general in Canada and it will be helpful to know that imports from these three foreign nations are in all instances marked with the name of the producing country. It should not be possible for any one of these countries to market its products in Canada through misrepresentation, the international situation being what it is and public opinion being what it is.