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Prophet's Bristles?

OFFERING his Beard of the Prophet once more, columnist Elmore Philpott has released his brain-teasers for 1954. He believes they are easier questions than last year's. We disagree. In three cases he asks who will occupy certain positions, and in a fourth he inquires about the affairs of a young woman's heart. Personalities are the most unpredictable of all subjects. It is easier to say whether there will be a war than whether Princess Margaret will become engaged. But here goes:

Will Princess Margaret become engaged to be married during the coming year? No. The Princess appears to recover quickly from what others like to think is a romance. It looks as if she prefers to remain single for a while.

Will there be a world war in 1954 involving Russia and the U.S.A.? No.

Will China's seat in the UN be allotted to the present Communist government in 1954? No. American resistance to this will not be overcome, particularly in a year when there are congressional elections.

Who will be Prime Minister of Britain at year end 1954? This is a tough one. Our guess is that Churchill is not well and that neither is Eden, despite the apparent recovery of each from recent illnesses. Also there are pressures within the Tory party. We are going to put the tab on the man occasionally mentioned—Rab Butler.

Who will be Prime Minister of Canada at year end 1954? This is not easy, either. St. Laurent is not young and has dropped one or two hints about retirement. But we pick him to finish the year.

Who will be Premier of B.C. at year end 1954? W. A. Bennett.

Will Canada have an official national flag by year end 1954? No. The subject did not get enough encouragement during recent debate in the House.

In the event of another British general election in 1954, which party will win? Conservative.

Will Canada's stock of wheat be greater or less on Dec. 31, 1954, than on Dec. 31, 1953? Less. This year's combination of shipping difficulties and good crop is not likely to be repeated.

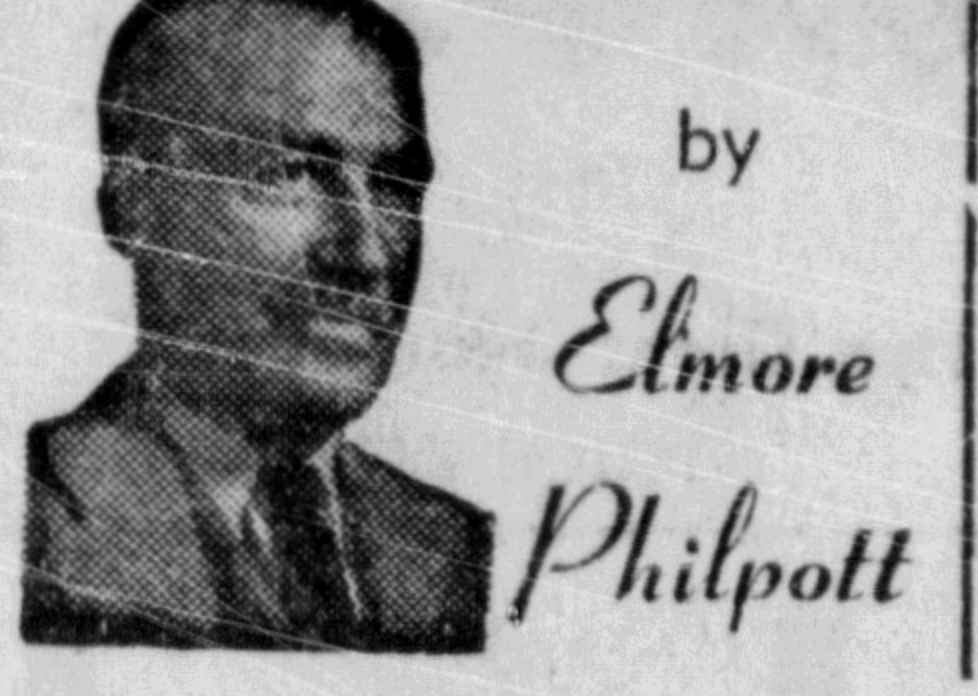
Will Canada still have troops in Korea? No. A year from now Korea will be ancient history.

That's it. Last year we had the right answers but did not get the Beard because we failed to file them with Mr. Philpott. This year we are doing so but cannot truthfully say we feel any stubble around the chin.

Elderly Chairman of Commission May Be Replaced by Younger Man

WASHINGTON—Renewed speculation is that the 67-year-old A. O. Stanley, chairman of the U.S. section of the International Joint Commission, soon may be relieved of his post. The commission, which regulates U.S.-Canadian boundary waters, will have an important say in how the St. Lawrence seaway will be constructed—and when. It also made the initial affirmative decision in connection with the river's power project. Critics of Stanley—a Kentuckian—contend that a man of his age should not retain such an important post. As the seaway

As I See It



Book on Sikhs

AROUND our house they never have to worry about what to give me for Christmas.

"Give dad a book" is the old standby, and it works out fine. This year I got several books, not only from the family, but from others too.

Claire Wallace even sent me a copy of her new 50 cent book called "Mind Your Manners."

I see that Claire is even one jump ahead of us M.P.'s for Claire does on her own what no parliament has yet done—picks a standard version of O Canada. Nice going, Claire, you put the lawmakers to shame.

ONE new book which deeply interested me was THE SIKHS, by Khuswant Singh.

It is published by George Allen and Unwin, London. In 215 pages it tells the whole story of the Sikhs—how they originated in India as a product of the conflicts between Muslims and Hindus.

The book even has some intriguing references to the Komogata Maru incident in 1914 when a whole shipload of would-be Sikh immigrants to Canada was turned back from Vancouver, in circumstances which were a sensation at the time. The timing of that episode tells part of the story for the author makes it clear that mischief-making German agents did have a minor hand in whipping up that crisis.

There is one serious weakness in the book. It does not tell how the Sikhs have later fitted so admirably into the Canadian picture; how they later fought a wonderful fight which not only won the rights of full Canadian citizenship for themselves, but by so doing won similar rights for persons of all other Asian origin.

THE AUTHOR is frankly skeptical about the survival of the Sikhs as a people separate from Hindus.

He shows how, after one serious war, the Sikhs became supporters of the British regime in India. He shows too that the strict British army regulations, which decreed that Sikh recruits must obey the rules of their religion and leave the hair and beard uncut, had a far-reaching effect in perpetuating Sikh separateness in India.

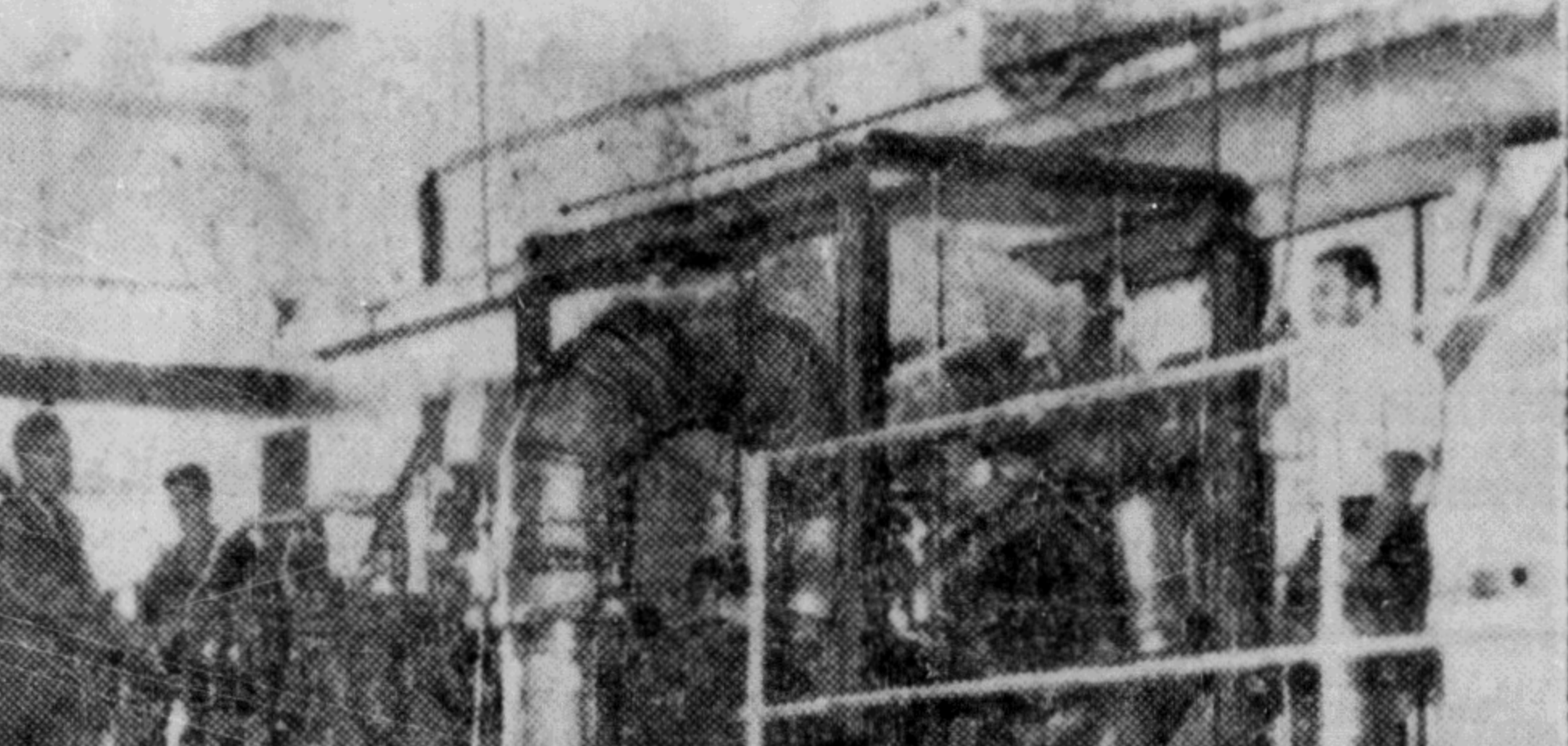
Actually, in Canada the majority of Sikhs no longer follow the customs of their forefathers. Only a few young Sikhs wear beards.

Of course the real importance of the Sikh way of life was not in externals, like uncut beards, and long hair under turbans—but what the Sikh religion put in the hearts of its followers.

If you want to see the proof of the spiritual power of the Sikh way of life take a good long look at the faces of the old men, sitting on the floor of the temple, in Vancouver, or out in India—as they listen to the reading of their holy book—the Adi Granth.

"By hearing the word, mortals are to godliness raised. . . Those that hear, death do not fear. Their sorrows end, sins disappear."

HUGE DOCK A graving dock built at Sydney, Australia, during the Second World War can handle the largest battleships.



Coal Burning Gas Turbine Engine May Bring New Life to Railways

MONTREAL (CP)—McGill University scientists have made the first successful test runs with a coal-burning gas turbine engine that may bring about a revolution in railway operations. Under design and construction for three years, the turbine may bring: Construction of a new type of locomotive, cheaper to operate and more efficient than anything now on the tracks. Use of coal-burning gas turbines to power electric generating units and to serve a variety of other functions. A boom in the Canadian coal industry, a casualty in the phenomenal development of oil and uses for oil.

GOVERNMENT CONCERN

Concern over the future of vast Canadian coal reserves led the federal government to ask McGill scientists to develop a coal-burning gas turbine engine.

A team set to work under Prof. Donald Louis Mordell, a cautious young Englishman who spent the war years working on development of aircraft jet engines.

They built an experimental 500-horsepower coal-burning gas turbine engine in McGill's gas dynamics laboratory at nearby Ste. Anne-de-Bellevue. A small furnace capable of burning three-quarters of a ton of pulverized coal an hour provides the power in the new engine. Air heaters pass the heat from the furnace gases to a compressor which drives the turbine, taken from a Rolls-Royce jet engine.

The engine is not a prototype for a locomotive or for other uses but it is expected to provide all the answers scientists need to know before the engine can be developed commercially. Prof. Mordell believes it may take two years to compile the necessary information.

U.S. Diplomat Secretly Trying To Resume Talks

PANMUNJOM (AP)—A United States diplomat disclosed today that he has been feeling out the Reds secretly on resuming the stalled preliminary Korean peace talks but there has been no indication that the Communists and Allies will return to the conference table.

Kenneth Young of the U.S. state department said the hush-hush negotiations have been handled by a go-between, whom he did not identify. It could be India, Switzerland or Sweden, each of which is represented here.

"From where I sit I can't say when it might be possible to resume the conference," Young said in an interview after the secret negotiations were interrupted.

The talks broke down Dec. 12 when the Communists accused the U.S. of perfidy. U.S. envoy Arthur Dean demanded a retraction, and ended the six weeks of negotiations after the Reds refused. Young said Russia's part in a peace conference remains the critical issue. The Reds demand that Russia be seated as a neutral. The U.S. has insisted that Russia either line up with the Communists or attend as a third party bound by conference decisions.

Speaking of chances that the Reds will back down on their charge of perfidy, Young said: "I do not think it is an impossible hurdle."

DATE UNSETTLED

There was no indication when the peace conference, originally scheduled to begin last October, will get under way. One of its agenda items was to be the disposition of war prisoners, Red and Allied, who refused to go home, but the prisoner issue is almost certain to be settled before a conference begins.

The Communists are expected to tell the neutral nations repatriation commission today how they want unrepatriated prisoners handled after Jan. 22.

PAINT A ROOM WITH THE ECONOMY PAINT
KEM-TONE FOR BEAUTIFUL WALLS AND CEILINGS

Ray Reflects and Reminisces

Senator Horner of Saskatchewan says there is nothing serious about the food surplus problem. Abolition of the machines that cut bacon, ham and other meats would turn the trick. Slices are thinner than paper. And, by the way, eliminate the word "slice."

HAVING A HISTORY

The head of the Canadian National Railways declines to co-operate with the Canadian Pacific Railway in the further expansion of that already spacious hotel in Vancouver. More than 40 years ago, the builders of the Grand Trunk Pacific solemnly told what there was of Prince Rupert that they had plans for a hotel. They had, too, for what you call a magnificent blue-print, a roomy and costly excavation, and a conference concerning hotels every 20 years or so. Anyhow, we're living longer nowadays.

NOT MERELY A DOZEN

"I think it would come as a surprise if I stated that today Canada, the only country in the world without a national flag, we are using twelve different kinds of official or authorized flags or ensigns." Moved to parliament (Ottawa) by Hon. Arsenault of Bonaventure, appointment of joint committee to choose a suitable design.

WHAT WOULD WE DO WITHOUT THE RADIO?

When the broadcast is having a tangle with something or other, a good, smart march strikes up, and first thing we're keeping time with finger tip or toe, and feel almost happy. Yugoslavia. Molotov . . . what will happen in Berlin? . . . who is the new French president? . . . Well, what if we have missed it all?

OTTAWA DIARY

By NORMAN M. McLEOD

One of the most important—as well as one of the most confident—of the current crop of predictions from Parliament Hill economists is that 1954 will be a holding year, rather than one of substantial gains, on the labor front.

The problem of the Northern Ontario and Quebec mines was a simple one. Bound by a fixed price for their product, which mainly was gold, they just didn't have the funds available with which to meet the wage demands of the miners. So mine management had no alternative to sitting out a strike until the workers realized that no matter how well organized the pressure of their unions might be, it could not prevail against economic law.

Now Federal economists proclaim that Canadian industry generally is in basically the same position as were the gold mines. The prices which it can demand for its products are no less rigidly fixed—not by any official mint price but by the prices of competing goods from countries with low-wage economies. That means mainly Western Germany and Japan. If Canadian manufacturers advance their prices beyond those of their German and Japanese competitors, they automatically price themselves out of their market—not only in foreign countries but also in the domestic market where foreign goods are becoming increasingly competitive.

In brief, the day when labor can negotiate itself wage increases which the manufacturer can simply pass on to the consumer in the guise of a higher price tag on his product is definitely gone. The trend now is the other way. That is to say, as competition from low-wage foreign sources intensifies, the Canadian manufacturer is coming under increasing pressure to lower his price tags. And while for the time being he may do so at the sacrifice of profit and overhead costs, he cannot continue indefinitely on such a course and maintain his competitive efficiency and attract the investment capital necessary to carry on his operation. If the pressure towards lower prices becomes a definite trend, then wages will have to contribute their share of the sacrifice to cut costs.

Federal economists are prophesying that that point may be reached before 1954 is ended.

Protest Seen On Fish Deal

MELBOURNE (Reuters)—An Australian deal with Russia for the import of canned fish, just announced, is "likely to prompt Canadian protests" the Melbourne Herald says today in a Canberra dispatch.

"For 50 years Canada has supplied Australia with canned salmon, but in these days we have not the dollars to buy them so the Australian government has given a Melbourne firm licence to import \$1,600,000 Australian—about \$3,600,000 worth of Soviet canned salmon and crab meat," the paper says.

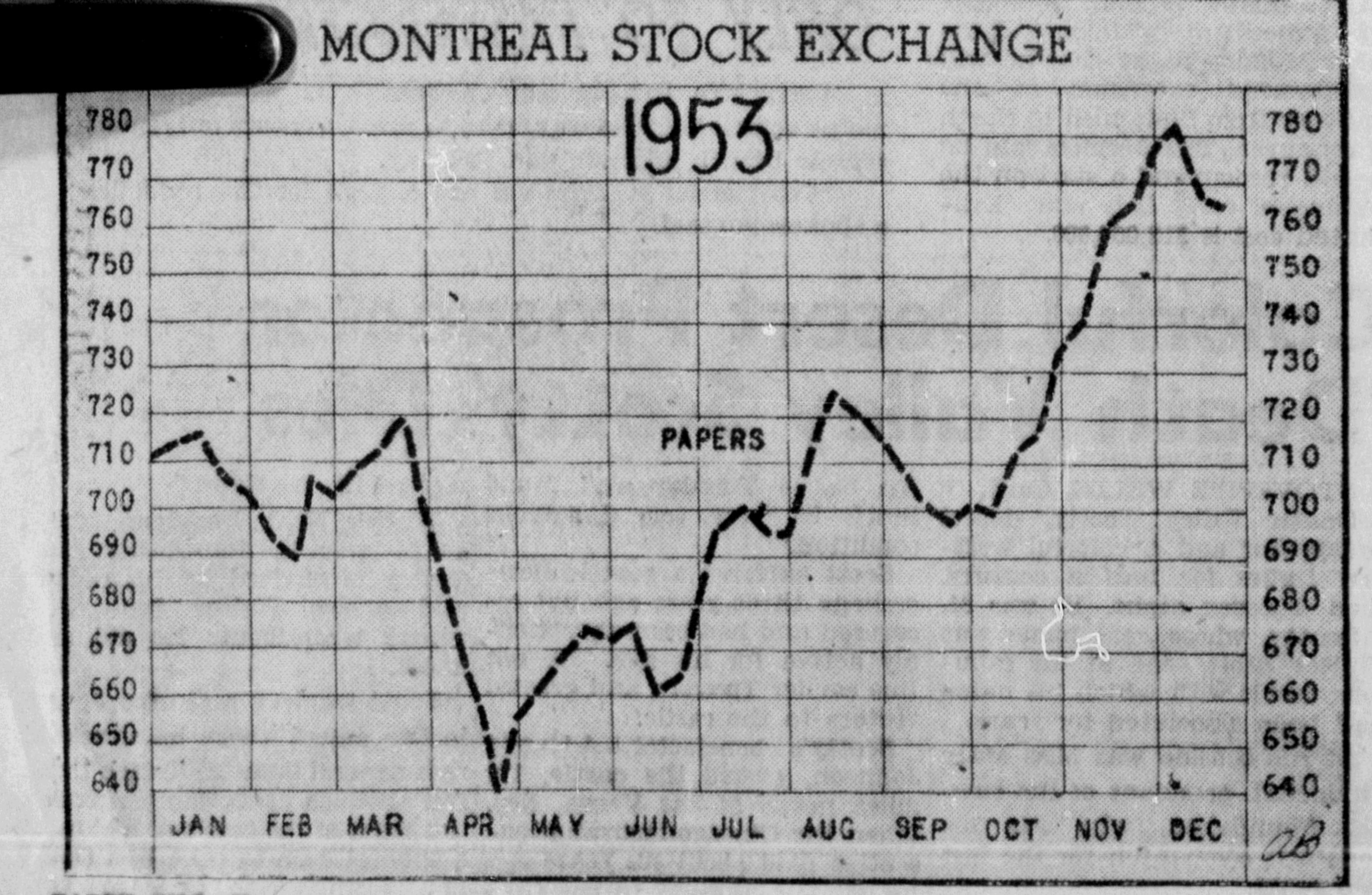
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PAPER STOCKS were the strongest performers in trading on the Montreal Stock Exchange in 1953. They suffered a sharp decline in March-April but then started a climb which continued with only relatively minor interruptions.