

## Talk of Shorter Skirts Premature Say Experts

By MURIEL NARRAWAY  
By Canadian Press Staff Writer  
LONDON (C)—Relax, ladies. It looks as though all that alarmist talk about skirt lengths going back to flapper days may have been a little premature.

Those who really know their fashions say the so-called short-skirt decree, said to have come straight from the high priests of couture in Paris, was just a newspaper pipe dream.

The fuss apparently started when first reports of the Paris shows played up the angle of skirt lengths. London news editors, scenting a catchy headline, promptly suggested the shorter skirt would plunge women back into the dark days of the 1920s, with kneecap lengths and shapeless "flapper" clothes.

### SHOWED MODEL

One enterprising paper summoned a model with shapely legs and portrayed her in poses calculated to show what the alleged abbreviated skirt would do for gals with graceful gams. Another paper ran a public opinion poll on skirt lengths.

Soon the reaction set in. The fashion writers came back from Paris and descended on Fleet street with murder in their eye. The trade journal World's Press News said "factual and balanced reports" of the shows had been slanted to play up the flapper angle.

Lyn Curry, fashion editor of the trade paper Fashions and Fabrics, accused editors of juggling with matters "vital" affecting an industry with a turnover of millions, and involving the livelihood of many thousands of people.

Newspapers, she claimed, overrode "the good, sincere work of

trained fashion reporters" to play up short skirts.

The new skirt, the fashion press and fashion trade noted with emphasis, was merely "an incidental" in Christian Dior's 200-piece Paris show. Its length is just three inches shorter than that of last year. It sits where the calf curves in towards the knee and is inches longer than the 1948 post-war length.

In fact, Dior has merely placed his seal on a length many women have been wearing since hems went back from ankle to mid-calf. In busy London streets at dark hours women can be seen wearing Dior's new length—without realizing it.

### STORIES UNFOUNDED

Mary Dunbar, writing in the Sunday Times, said the back-to-the-flapper-days stuff is unfounded. She said nearly every model in the big Dior collection had wide shoulders and an exaggerated bosom, bearing no resemblance to the sack-shaped, boyish flapper dresses with straight back, bosomless front and sloopy shoulderline.

A good indication that the short-skirt scare is at least premature is provided by the longer skirts featured by all other well-known couturiers in London and Paris. Royal designer Norman Hartnell, commenting on the clothes the Queen will wear on her tour of Australia and New Zealand, said there will be no Dior hemline.

"The Queen's dresses will be an elegant mid-calf length. Much the most graceful for women's skirts," said Hartnell.

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