STORIES FROM THE ARCHIVES:

Putting the Hemline Index to the Test

The "Hemline Index" was devised in 1926 by George Taylor (1901-1972), a professor of industrial relations at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. His theory suggests the length of women's skirts and dresses can be indicative of the direction of financial markets. In other words, hemlines rise in times of economic prosperity and elongate when the economy slows.

But is it true? Stock markets were strong in the 1920s (before the 1929 Wall Street Crash), yet the Prefects in 1924 were wearing quite ***long*** skirts.

The oil crisis in late 1973 led to a stock market crash in 1973 and 1974, when the New York Stock Exchange lost 45% of its value. Yet, the House Captains in 1974 were wearing quite ***short*** uniforms – look at all those knees!

SO, is Taylor's theory completely crazy? Was fashion at PLC hopelessly out-of-step? With talk of a COVID-led recession, will hemlines fall?

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