

GST to raise textbook prices next January

by Ita Kendall

MONTREAL (CUP) — If you're still groaning over the cost of your textbooks this year, just wait until next January.

In 1991, the federal government's proposed goods and services tax (GST) will push the price of textbooks up by at least seven per cent, with Canadian books costing as much as 12 per cent more.

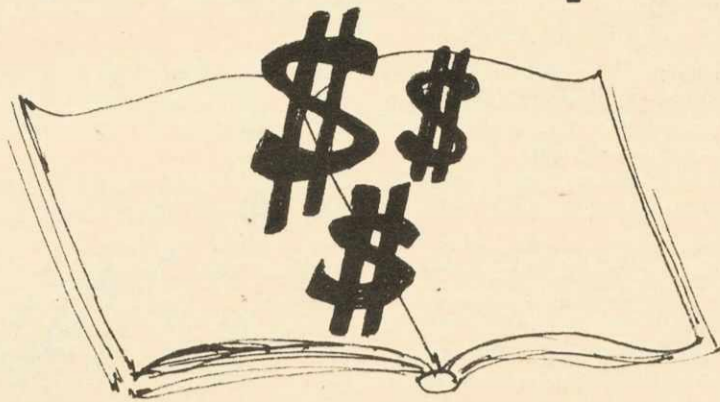
Proposed GST legislation, introduced Dec. 19, adds a seven per cent tax to goods and services at the retail level.

It is designed to replace the hidden manufacturer's sales tax (MST) of 13.5 per cent which is tacked onto about one-third of Canadian manufactured goods before they reach the consumer. The GST is expected to generate \$18 billion in revenue which is what the MST brings in now, according to federal finance department public relations official Rick Doyon.

However, critics argue that the tax is compounded. It is paid on new books and then again when those books are resold.

The GST will be applied across the board with few exceptions, making papers, magazines and newspapers taxable for the first time.

Concern about the effect the tax will have on the Canadian publishing industry has prompted publishers and booksellers to form the Don't Tax Reading Coalition.



The Toronto-based coalition is lobbying the government to exempt the Canadian publishing industry from the GST, as well as encouraging other groups, including students, to join the fight against the tax.

"Students will be hit hardest by this tax," said David Hunt, spokesperson for the coalition. "They spend more on books, magazines and newspapers than anyone else. Students can't refuse to buy compulsory textbooks just because the prices go up."

A study by the Association of Canadian Publishers suggested the GST would increase the price of the average Canadian book by 11 or 12 per cent.

"The increase in book prices due to the GST will reduce demand for books and will lead to smaller print runs, smaller or non-existent profits," Hunt said. "This will force publishers to raise prices by more than seven per cent just to make up for lost sales."

The average student with five courses spends \$400-500 on

books, according to Lina Lipscombe, manager of the Concordia University's bookstore.

When the tax kicks in, that will go up to between \$428 and \$560.

"What really infuriates me is that the government is showing all this concern about literacy and then they tax books," Lipscombe said. "Books are a need, not a luxury."

"The government is taxing education."

Lipscombe says Canadian books, which make up approximately 25 to 30 per cent of the texts in university bookstores, are particularly vulnerable to the tax. And students buy a bigger proportion of Canadian books than the general public.

"Students will be paying the tax and the increased prices while other consumers will buy American or not buy at all," Hunt said.

Don't count on savings at used or discount bookstores either. The GST will have to be paid on those sales as well.

Canadian University Press, a national cooperative of student newspapers is also a member of the coalition. The organization joined the lobby group last month.

Most of the nation's newspapers are contributing to the campaign: the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association and the Canadian Community Newspaper Association are members.

CUP Briefs

Women's Studies arrive

by Patricia Robertson

TORONTO (CUP) — York University may be the first institution in Canada to have a Women's Studies graduate program.

The program which could be in place by the fall, could include both a master's and doctorate degree.

"It is imperative that there is a grad program in order for women's studies to be recognized as a full and independent discipline," said York women's studies student Penney Kirby.

York has about 25 students enrolled in its interdisciplinary undergraduate program (Honours, Double Major) in Women's Studies. Others enrol in Women's Studies courses without declaring it as a major.

Thelma MacCormack, Director designate of the Graduate Program, said in the wake of the Montreal tragedy women are not intimidated.

"We are moving ahead. It would give us a great feeling of pleasure to establish a graduate school nine months [after the massacre] as a response," MacCormack said.

Many graduate departments, English and Sociology and Social and Political Thought, have students doing graduate work specifically on women.

"I've been flooded with calls inquiring about this program," said Nancy Mandell, undergraduate Women's Studies co-ordinator.

"There are a number of people interested in the program, especially professionals and members of the private sector wishing to upgrade their skills," MacCormack said.

Unlike other graduate programs, Kirby said, women's studies must incorporate both research and activism to be effective.

Sandra Pyke, Dean of Graduate Studies, says "York is at the forefront in terms of educational initiatives for women."

The Ontario Council of Graduate Studies must approve the program and York's curriculum committee is also reviewing the program.

Concordia buying voters

MONTREAL (CUP) — Concordia University students will go to the polls next month to elect next year's co-presidents, but the attraction may not be the candidate's charisma.

The council is offering a free holiday to a spring break destination to a lucky voter.

"If we're going to spend \$2500 to \$3000 on advertising which up to now has been ineffective, then to spend \$300 to \$400 on a trip which may be a much more effective tool seems worth it," said the council's elections officer Robert Douglas.

Observers had originally balked at the idea, but the students council adopted it to help cure the apathy they say plagues Concordia students.

Despite increased advertising, only 1326 of Concordia's 25,000 students voted in last year's election.

"You can almost write an editorial on the poor election turnout every year," Douglas said. "No one gives a shit about the elections."

Douglas blames the problem on the student government, which he says doesn't take its job seriously.

Harassment charges appealed — again

by Karen Hill

TORONTO (CUP) — Richard Hummel will take the University of Toronto's sexual harassment committee decision against him to court.

A hearing panel said the chem-

ical engineering professor sexually harassed Beverly Torfason by "prolonged and intense staring" in Hart House pool in the spring of 1989.

He appealed the decision to another university board, and in a 3-2 decision last month the appeal was rejected.

The committee banned Hummel from a campus athletics facility for five years, but later reduced the punishment.

Hummel said he is confident he will win his case in Ontario Divisional Court. Arthur Martin, a former Ontario Supreme Court justice chaired the appeal panel. He disagreed with panel's final decision and recommended a new hearing.

"If one was a bookmaker, one would use what a judge would say," said Hummel. "Martin ordered another hearing. There may be some differences (on the panel) but it is one legal opinion."

U of T vice president Gordon Cressy said the university will stand behind the policy.

"If they decide to go after it, the university would certainly defend it."

And, he added, U of T would probably pay Torfason's legal fees, as it did for the original hearing and the appeal.

"Up until now, we've supported her and I assume we would continue to do so."

Torfason said she is ready to defend herself again.

"We've won twice and we don't see any reason why we'd lose now."

MuchMusic Tours

The Grawood!

Friday Night Only!

His galore make it on to the big screen as the MuchMusic Show plays the Grawood one night only this Friday, January 26 at 9 pm! The MuchMusic show tailors itself exclusively to a wild time of dancing and carrying on at the Grawood. And after the sights and sounds of Friday night, drop by the Grawood Wednesday, January 31 at 9 pm for a evening of laughs as the Campus Comedy Regional Finals take place!

This Week!

Thursday, Jan. 25
9 pm - DJ. James spins discs and feet!

Friday, Jan. 26
9 pm - MuchMusic Video Show Live In The Grawood!
Saturday, Jan. 27
12 Noon - 4 pm
Open Mic!
Wednesday, Jan. 31
Campus Comedy Regional Finals!

