

(3) A realistic appraisal came from the Chief Economist of the Conference Board of Canada, Mr. J. G. Frank who told the Committee regarding the Board's own price impact estimate of 1.4% and the Government's 1.25% forecast, "I would say to you, again candidly, that is a lower bound estimate. That is the minimum you can expect, and it goes up from there based on how those two assumptions are at odds with reality." (45:43) These assumptions, full pass-through of FST savings, no wage-price inflationary spiral, are key to the Government's estimates of the price impact of the GST.

B. Removing the FST

(4) In estimating the impact of the GST on the overall price level, it is important to assess how the price of individual goods and services are likely to react. The application of the GST will affect relative prices by raising significantly the price of services and other items that currently bear no direct federal sales tax. The brief received from Informetrica Limited indicated that the GST would raise the price of recreational services by 8.0%, restaurant, hotel and tavern services by 7.4%, natural gas by 7.3%, electricity by 6.8%, women's and children's clothing by 5.9%, footwear by 4.8% and so on.

(5) In order to achieve a small overall price increase from introducing the GST, the prices of other goods currently subject to Federal Sales Tax must fall when that tax is removed. It has been suggested that the price of automobiles, furniture, and household durables that now contain the Federal Sales Tax will decline once this tax is removed. However, for this to happen, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers will have to lower their prices