

Media not creeps — Mansbridge

by Lisa Clifford

Described by some as the "best television reporter in the business," Peter Mansbridge defended his title in a lecture to a full house in the Dalhousie SUB last Wednesday evening. His subject: *Television News: the good, the bad, the medium.*

Mansbridge, anchor of CBC's *The National* and *Sunday Report*, made headlines last year when he turned down a reported seven-figure salary as host of CBS's New York-based *The Morning Program*. Mansbridge spoke of his decision to remain in Canada and admitted that only a last minute offer by veteran newscaster and former anchor of *The National* Knowlton Nash saved him from a career of interviewing starlets and joking with a roly-poly weatherman. Being anchor of *The National* said Mansbridge, "is the best job in Canadian journalism" and Nash's offer to hand over his seat on this program was too good to refuse.

The reporter directed the body of his remarks towards stereotypes and misconceptions of the media. Said Mansbridge, "we are portrayed as picture-crazy creeps with no morals." He commented that this annoys many in the industry who pride themselves on professionalism and responsibility. "Television news is supposed to mirror reality" said Mansbridge and this results in complaints that the media are too graphic and insensitive. Mansbridge defended his profession and the scenes of horrifying violence which often accompany the nightly news, affirming that reality often helps us to understand a situation more clearly. He freely admitted that "feelings of the family don't enter into the equation when reporting a news story" but judgements are made



Mansbridge: Chewed up and spat out by P.E.T.

with care and all issues are discussed when deciding what goes into that twenty-two minute broadcast.

When answering questions from the audience, Mansbridge shocked many by admitting his lack of formal education. A high school drop out, young Mansbridge was working at an airport in Western Canada when the local manager of a CBC radio station heard him make an announcement on the PA system. Impressed by Mansbridge's voice the man asked him to join the local branch of CBC radio.

Mansbridge also mentioned that his two most difficult interviews were with former Prime

Minister Pierre Trudeau and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Trudeau "chewed me up and spit me out" said Mansbridge. He denies, however, being intimidated by any current political figure.

N.S. court gives poor people a break

by Lorna Irons

The Supreme Court of Nova Scotia ruled last week that imprisoning poor people because they lack the money to pay fines is unconstitutional. Mr Justice William Kelly handed down his decision in the case of Judy Hebb, a 35 year-old Halifax woman who was convicted of stealing a pack of cigarettes in August of 1987. Hebb has a long history of mental illness, and lives only on public assistance. When she was unable to pay a \$500 fine, Hebb was ordered to serve 30 days in jail.

Vince Calderhead, of the Metro Community Law clinic and one of Hebb's lawyers in the case, said that the judgement is significant because it confirms that "there should not be two systems of jus-

Student Aid Report urges reform

by Erin Goodman

HALIFAX (CUP) — The advisory board on post-secondary education to the Maritime premiers has released the report on student aid that the Students' Union of Nova Scotia has been waiting for.

SUNS executive say they are "very pleased" with the February report of the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Committee, entitled "Student Aid for the Nineties". The report outlines a comprehensive series of proposed reforms to the student aid system, including proposals for increased aid, a loans remission program, a revamped part-time student aid package, and new initiatives to open up a federal-provincial dialogue on student aid.

"The report has confirmed what we've been saying for a long time," says Robin Hamilton, deputy chair of SUNS. The last student aid study initiated by the MPHEC was released in 1980. Fifteen recommendations were made to the provincial governments at that time, but, says Hamilton, "none of them were acted upon. This time it's important that it (the report) not get stalled because the research has already been done. There's no reason for the provinces not to implement the recommendations." The report was formulated

with input from two recently-appointed student representatives to the MPHEC — Royden Trainor, former chair of SUNS, and Jane Arnold, incoming chair of the Canadian Federation of Students.

Hamilton recalls that the 1980 recommendations were undermined by lack of policy coordination between the provincial and federal governments. "The federal government initiated their own study (on student aid) at that time, so the MPHEC report never made it as far as it should," he says, adding that a recommendation to open dialogue on student aid between federal and provincial officials would facilitate the process if implemented.

The MPHEC recommendations are based on the belief that the student aid system should promote or enhance post-secondary education, as opposed to merely facilitating the opportunity to participate as in the past. SUNS approves the recommendation to increase the maximum loan/bursary to \$7,000 from the current maximum allowance of \$5,360, a corresponding "debt floor" of \$8,000 for a three-year undergraduate program would guarantee that loans beyond that level would be remitted by the provincial government in an effort to relieve student debt.

However, according to SUNS executives, an ideal system would not create the debt load in the first place. Comments Hamilton, "It's an illogical move to create the debts and then wipe them out."

Another MPHEC recommendation calls for "regional portability", allowing students to transfer credits easily from one Maritime university to another. SUNS would like to see this taken a step further, calling for the implementation of a program allowing equal accessibility for Maritime students to all university programs across Canada.

Long-term recommendations of the MPHEC were also included in the report, designed to be implemented before 1993. These recommendations provide strategies to avoid high debt; bursaries are to be "front-end loaded", which allows a student who qualifies for a bursary to receive it before having to amass a maximum loan of almost \$3,000, and required parental contribu-

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rice, one for the rich and one for the poor."



He says that in the past, under the province's Fine Default Scheme, "warrants of committal" were automatically issued to jail those who did not pay their fines. "The courts will now have to consider the circumstances of all people. Before any warrant is issued there will have to be a hearing to determine the person's ability to pay the fine," explains

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