## Mansbridge keeps cool at Osgoode forum

eter Mansbridge is smooth. He exudes confidence with every facial expression and utterance of his voice.

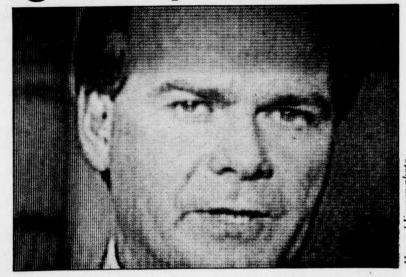
He appeared at Osgoode Hall's Moot Court last Wednesday, before a group of law students anxious to grill him, and came away unscathed.

When you think about it, lawyers and anchormen actually have quite a bit in common. Both professions require stature and eloquence, along with an ability to instill confidence in the audience.

As a 22 year veteran of CBC News, Mansbridge has become a master. Progressing from his early years on CBC Radio in Winnipeg. he has risen to become the best known face in Canadian broadcasting. As the anchor of Sunday Report since 1980, and The National since May, 1988, he has also faced the bulk of criticism the CBC has received for its coverage of various events.

When a student asked about the CBC's supposedly pro-Meech Lake slant, Mansbridge defended the network by saying that both sides predicted a bad outcome. "Those who argued for Meech Lake," he emphasized, "argued that, if it wasn't passed, the country would break up." Opponents of the Accord, however, predicted a similar outcome if Meech was passed.

"The only conscious decision we made was to cover an important story. Both sides were herald-



ing future crisis," he said, "Canadians wanted to hear what was going on.

At the same time, however, Mansbridge did see a fault in the coverage. "We didn't hear enough from ordinary Canadians," he said, adding that he found it "mind-boggling," that so many debate, rather than the substance.

He also explained that he doesn't really see a difference, since the "combative, short clips," shown usually get to the core of the argument in question. Ultimately, he places the blame upon the audience. "Viewers have a

footage of the standoff between the Native warriors and the military

Yet, he explained, "The camera doesn't always tell the truth." making commentary neccessary at times. Referring to television's tendency to show the immediacy of a situation, he said, "You have to know the strengths of your medium. We made a conscious decision to show that footage and let the public make its own decision.

He believes that the CBC's newscasts, often leaving footage open to interpretation, are part of a distinctively Canadian broadcast style that "is closer to the British," in that it is more documen-

The Americans, in contrast, have a style that relates every story to the United States. This is only natural, said Mansbridge, as they are a super power. To cite an example, he described the scant international coverage that the Oka crisis received.

To an American journalist, Oka was a Canadian problem. According to Mansbridge, CBC determines prominent coverage of stories based on what impacts people's safety, their pocket books and their interests day by

He admitted that, "we are in a very judgemental business. That's why there is not one person making the decisions.

Clearly, Mansbridge has an important say in those decisions. and how they are presented to the nation. His very manner demonstrates his mastery of the news medium; his ability to influence a crowd. He came fully prepared for the onslaught that came from the students, and came away clean.

## Viewers have a responsibility as well... They have to want to be informed

Canadians tuned into gameshows, rather than coverage of such an important national issue.

Mansbridge believes that apathy may have been caused by boredom. It is for this reason, he said, that "there is a tendency on the part of all media to spend more time on the cut and thrust of responsibility as well," he said, "They have to want to be

According to Mansbridge, the key to attracting viewers lies in a bare presentation of the news. CBC was highly praised for its coverage of the Oka situation, raw

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