

NEWS

Mansbridge keeps cool at Osgoode forum

by Howard Kaman

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

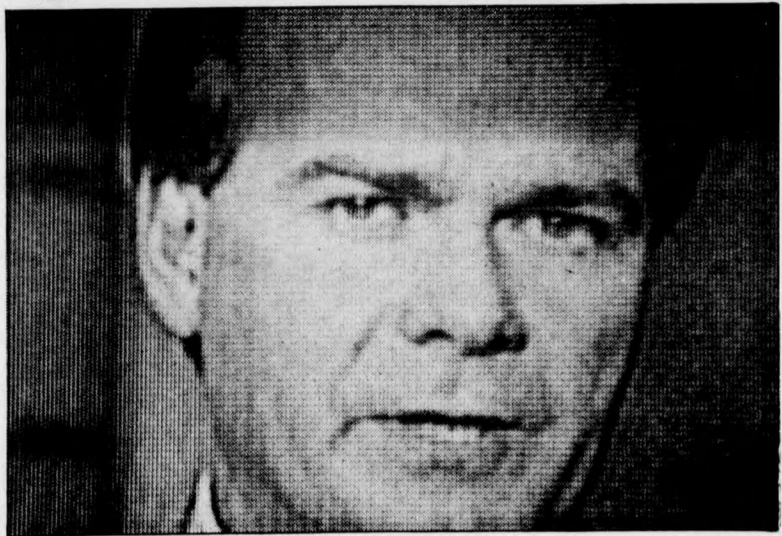
He appeared at Osgoode Hall's Moot Court last Wednesday, before a group of law students anxious to grill him, and came away unscathed.

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-



Howard Kaman photo

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

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

Canadians tuned into game-shows, 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 informed."

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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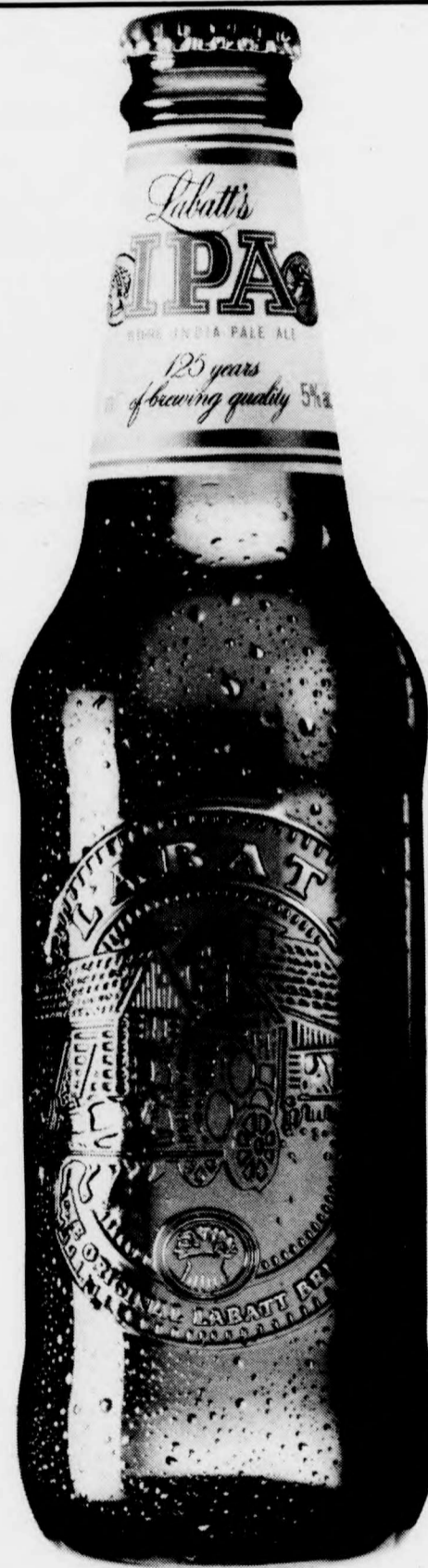
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