TORONTO STAR FIRES REPORTER CLAIRE HOY, 
SUES HIM AND TV STATIONS ON LIBEL CHARGE.

On October 2, a Toronto Star reporter, Claire Hoy, appeared on CITY-TV and criticized the paper he worked for. On October 3, he was interviewed on CBLT. On October 7 he was suspended by the Star and a week later he was fired when he refused to sign a two-page prepared statement of apology.

Since then the Star has launched a lawsuit against Hoy and the two television stations or charges of libel. The Star's political editor, David Crane, joined the Star in the action. Hoy had referred to an article by Crane in his TV interviews.

Both TV stations had rejected the Star's requests that they broadcast retractions.

The Toronto Newspaper Guild has taken Hoy's dismissal into grievance procedure. As reported in the Guild paper, "The New Lead", the Star contends that Hoy's statements were inaccurate and highly detrimental to this newspaper and to fellow staff members. In the New Lead's account of the Hoy firing, Guild President Jim Robinson commented: "To deny a reporter's right to speak out truthfully against what he believes to be seriously wrong with his newspaper - with its enormous responsibility to the public interest - would be a dangerous precedent indeed."

According to Robinson, the first question that arises is whether Hoy's statements were true.

As the libel suit may be before the Court by the time this issue of Media Probe is published, any repetition of Hoy's statements or comment on them here could be in contempt - but we will be reporting on proceedings.

Meanwhile we reflect that the Star has, over the past few years, published criticisms of itself. One such criticism was that of Senator Keith Davey, whose Report on the Mass Media in 1970 held up the Star as a shining model of journalism. By 1972, however, Keith Davey was to write in the October 25th letters page of the Star, "...The Star, even in its news columns, has to many people appeared to demonstrate a determinedly anti-Liberal posture through this entire campaign."

As evidence he cited (1) Tory candidates in eastern Ontario who are reproducing as paid advertising a front page Star story about alleged "celebration of French power by Liberal ministers in Quebec," and (2) how "Star coverage of last week's mammoth Liberal rally at Maple Leaf Gardens all but ignored the fact that it was the biggest, most successful meeting of this campaign. Indeed almost chose to ignore speeches by the Prime Minister..."