

Reisman reassures CFTA on free trade deal

TORONTO - Chief free trade negotiator Simon Reisman spoke before a luncheon organized by the Canadian Film and Television Association (CFTA) at Toronto's Sutton Place Hotel. While conceding that the speech "didn't strike me as a great idea - at least from my standpoint," he was encouraged to make it by his boss in cultural matters relating to free trade, Flora MacDonald. Significantly, he also admitted that he had "not spoken once on the cultural issues, as such."

It was a 'good news' speech, in the sense that no news is good news. He repeated his often-quoted line, "Film and television was never the subject of negotiations at my negotiating table - neither on the table, beside the table, or under the table."

He went on to say, "We meet all of our objectives with respect to cultural industries. In fact, some of the people on my team tell me we

can be accused of overachieving. I know a lot of you in this audience are skeptical about the last statement. Well, I'll tell you: there is no basis in fact for the charge that Canadian cultural industries have been hurt by the Free Trade Agreement."

Calling Michael Bergman's article in the February '88 issue of *Cinema Canada* ("Trick-or-Treaty?") part of a "deliberate campaign of disinformation" and "a vendetta against the agreement," he enumerated nine points which he declared were false. He concluded this portion of his address by saying, "There is not one major point in this article which stands the test of close scrutiny." He praised the performance of Flora MacDonald in the long negotiations, and claimed, "She fought like a Trojan for the interests of your industry." Referring to the recent Film Productions Importation Bill tabled in the House of Commons recently, he said it would be good for the industry, "while at the same time avoiding a battle royal with the Americans... there will be significant new funding for the production and distribution of Canadian films."

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The constant growth of the B.C. film industry over the last couple of years is bringing out free-enterprisers of all sorts.

On-Set Film Promotions is a new company which hopes to make its fortune placing consumer products slap-bang in the middle of a film or TV show. Vice-president Srina Cheikes says the film companies get the stuff at no cost; the manufacturer pays \$10,000 for a year. On-Set, perhaps optimistically, hopes to place each product in up to six productions. Pepsi has already signed up.

And FilmFacts is now busily researching just about anything you, as a filmmaker, might want to know. Eileen Moore and Marilyn Taylor say they'll tackle any topic and deliver the results to your door.

- They must like us in Texas. BCTV news producer/editor George Browne won a Bronze Award at the 10th Annual Houston International Film and Video Festival for *Rick Hansen - In Dreams Begins Responsibility*. The TV-special was made up of video from 50 different foreign broadcasters who covered Hansen's 'Man in Motion' wheelchair tour.

Yaletown Productions did even better, winning a Gold at Houston in the public service documentary category. *Earthquakes in Canada* was produced for the federal department of Energy, Mines and Resources and measured at least five on the Richter scale.

- If your tastes run to blood in the gutters - or sewers - pick up Michael Slade's latest horror novel *Ghoul*. It'll make you want to seal off the drainpipes at the summer cottage.

But, if you can't find a copy, don't despair. This orgy of psychotic mass-murder has been optioned by L.A. producer Michael Viner. Slade's earlier novel, *Headhunter*, is also destined to stain the silver screen with rivers of gore. Cardinal Films of England and Raymond International of Toronto are co-producing an adaptation by John Hunter (*The Grey Fox*) which will be shot in Vancouver this summer.

Why is this item in Fronts West? Because 'Michael Slade' is, in reality, a team of Vancouver lawyers whose literary excursions into the darkest side of human nature are such big hits, they might never have to appear in court again.

- There's a new boss at Pacific Cinematheque. Diedra McDevitt is executive director of the nonprofit film centre. Apparently she 'believes strongly in the partnership of business and arts' and comes to the job after a successful run with the Vancouver Folk Festival.

And pay-TV's SuperChannel has a new script consultant in Vancouver. Tara Twigg replaced Donaleen Saul in mid-May. She should know her writing as, along with husband Alan, she launched the province's incredibly successful literary newspaper *B.C. Bookworld*.

- A name that frequently appears in that publication is Jack Hodgins. His books of short stories (which, collectively, are little short of novels) beautifully capture vignettes of West Coast life.

One of them, *Delaney Island*, is being adapted by the CBC's Hart Hanson as *The Main Chance*, part of the network's *The Way We Are* series of half-hour dramas. Shooting began in late June with Don Haldane (*Ritter's Cove*, *The Campbells*) directing Lally Cadeau, Tom Heaton and Zack Ansley (*Cowboys Don't Cry*).

- Canadian Prolite is moving North. Not too far, just across the street from Cannell's new studios in North Vancouver. The new 5,500 square foot office/warehouse is in addition to the company's downtown location which will become a maintenance facility.

Kamloops into self-promotion

KAMLOOPS - The City of Kamloops, B.C. is establishing its own film promotion board. Organizer Don Martin feels the interior community is ideal for making Westerns. In a B.C. interview, he said there are people in Kamloops who have worked on productions in the Lower Mainland "and are quite capable of working on a major feature film or TV series."

"Plus we have the backdrop (producers) might need for a Western look. Consider also that, in a radius 100 miles from Kamloops, you've got a rain forest, lakes, rivers and mountains."

Martin says the possibility of establishing a base of technical support services also exists. "Our local TV station is quite interested," he says, adding that local governments are also supportive.

"We would look at ourselves as second location, second unit for a start and then, you never know, the future could make this a film location. Period."

He says Vancouver's Meta Group has indicated interest in Kamloops as a support location.

Martin was planning to meet with local supporters and B.C. Film Commission head Diane Neufeld in June to discuss formal establishment of a Kamloops Film Board.