

SUBMISSION FROM TITANIC GAP

26th January 2015

Dear Clerk,

I'm writing regarding the public debate in the press and media about Scotland's need for a film studio.

I was the Chairman of Northern Ireland Screen Commission 2008-2013 responsible for the development of the successful Titanic Studio in Belfast and negotiating to secure Game of Thrones.

Scotland has not been as successful as in securing major incoming Film and TV projects or developing indigenous projects as it might have been. A number of factors would quickly reverse this.

Studio Facility.

Scotland lacks purpose-built sound-stages to provide for large Film and TV projects. The studio facilities in Northern Ireland have vast build space, large workshops and storage on site and are 10minutes from the airport. If I wanted to site a similar facility in Scotland then West or South West Glasgow would appear to offer similar infrastructure opportunities and proximate access to airport links. If you build it they will come... However studio facility alone is not going to guarantee success.

Screen Agency and funding.

Scotland lacks a screen agency. A dedicated film, TV and digital content agency is able to provide the sort of industry focus that the Film and TV industries require. If you want to grow inward investment and indigenous talent then design an organisation that is aligned to their needs, has adequate funding, and quick decision making processes. Creative Scotland is a superb organisation but it is not a dedicated screen organisation.

Political support.

The First Minister and Deputy First Minister in Northern Ireland quickly grasped the potential inward investment which Film and TV industries offered and the synergy this brings to indigenous talent. They lobbied to secure the successful tax break for TV drama and animation (Game of Thrones was the treasury case-study). They entertained and visited the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of large media companies.

Your politicians have been superb at working to ensure the BBC and UK public service broadcasters invested in Scotland. Greater impact in a global market is possible. A dedicated team within a Scottish Screen Agency would allow targeted international marketing and intelligence for political intervention.

I've tried to keep this note brief, I'd be happy to discuss this further with you if desired- there's more that might be said and much to learn from Northern Ireland's successful model.

Scotland has the talent, Scotland has the landscapes-Scotland really ought to build the infrastructure.

Best regards,

Rick Hill MBE BSc BD