

Draft letter to The Times from the Booker Prize Committee to be signed presumably by one or both of the Chairmen.

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Booker Prize	5/11/73
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2nd November, 1973.

The Editor,
The Times,
Printing House Square,
LONDON, E.C.4.

Sir,

The Booker Prize Committee do not normally seek the limelight, but we have felt that Ion Trewin's interesting article in Friday's paper called for a response.

We appreciate Mr. Trewin's generous comments about the Prize and his strongly expressed appreciation of its value. When it comes to his criticisms of the organisation it would perhaps be tedious to explain in detail how the current arrangements were arrived at, though he can be assured that they were discussed in great detail by a panel which contains at least three publishers and others closely connected with the publishing industry.

There are a few particular points in Mr. Trewin's article which may be justified in mentioning. They are:

1. One cannot help noticing that THE BLACK PRINCE which he refers to as the 'favourite' was in fact introduced under the 'call in' system which suggests that this system is not so inadequate as it has been made out to be.

2. He perhaps does not know that publishers are invited to send a list as well as they actual titles they submit of other novels which they think the panel might be interested in. This gives the panel the maximum 'call in' opportunities.

3. The idea of having the Prize in the spring was tried before with unsatisfactory results.

contd./.....

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4. If, as he suggests, and we would certainly like, the Booker Prize to achieve the effect of the Goncourt it seems worth taking note of the Goncourt system whereby the publication date and announcement of the prize are very close together. Mr. Trewin points out - and experience has shown us - that to revive a minor novel, however good and however overlooked it may have been, into big sales by a late award has proved to be impossible.

We should add that all the suggestions and criticisms made have been and will be most carefully considered in the fairly difficult task of arranging this Prize to the satisfaction of everybody.

Yours faithfully,

Chairman