

11 February 1972

David Holloway, Esq.,  
The Daily Telegraph,  
135 Fleet Street,  
London, E. C. 4.

Dear David,

Further to my letter of 24 January, we had a meeting of the Booker Prize Committee and considered at some length your letter of 9 January.

The Committee were very appreciative of your letter, since we all realise that the rules of such a Prize must create problems in certain quarters. We do, however, feel that the Prize is now settling down to a reasonably acceptable format and, as you so kindly say, has managed to break through the indifference barrier.

We fully realise the many problems which must face the reviewers in September/October. However, big-headed as we may be, we don't feel that the glut of books at this time is, to any appreciable extent, affected by the Booker Prize. As you know, we do think it desirable for the publication date of the winning novel to be near the date of the Prize: we also wish the Prize to be the best novel of the year.

And so, in the rules for the 1972 Prize, we are going to put more emphasis on the fact that each publisher is asked to submit a list of up to four further titles published or to be published between 1 January 1972 and the final closing date. This gives the judges the right to call in novels published between 1 January and the start of the eligible period.

In a further attempt to lessen your problems we are proposing to extend the eligible period by one month so that novels with a scheduled publication date between 31 July and 16 November will automatically be eligible. The onus is on the publisher to submit their list of novels published between 1 January and 31 July.

I do hope these amendments to the rules will, to a certain extent,

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ease some of your problems. We intend holding the Prize-giving in November again and I do appreciate your comments on the 1971 occasion.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

J. N. Murphy