

25 February 1972

Booker Prize

I have spoken to Martyn Goff and Marilyn Edwards today. Two matters need considering:

(i) Judges

We still have only two firm judges and are still awaiting a reply from Norman Mailer. Arthur Koestler turned it down. Martyn Goff is still keen on Julian Symonds being Chairman and it is only Tom Maschler who is against this. Martyn has agreed to see if he can persuade Tom to change his mind when he gets back from holiday next week.

Other suggestions put forward by Marilyn are Kenneth Allsopp and possibly Melvyn Bragg (George Hardinge is not too keen on Melvyn Bragg since he says there will be too many novelists).

(ii) The date of the prizegiving is creating problems for Martyn and Marilyn. National Book Week is from November 4 to 11 and the Children's Book Show from November 8 to 15. Marilyn says it will not be possible to do the Children's Book Show and the Booker Prize and has suggested that the Prize giving is either moved forward to 2 November or back to 23 or 30 November. Could you let Martyn and Marilyn know our views? We should contact Roy Jenkins if it is proposed to change the date.