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14th February, 1972.

John Murphy, Esq.,
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Dear John,

I am writing about the David Holloway letter as all this seems to be getting into a bit of a muddle and I haven't had any luck in getting you on the telephone.

You will remember the Committee asked me to produce a draft, which I did and circulated it to everyone present for their comments so that whatever was written in the end should be unanimous.

Since then I have spoken to Michael Weekes who says he thinks you now feel that the letter to David Holloway will come best from yourself anyway. I should think you are right and I was only trying to help out, so please don't think there is any disgruntlement about this. It is just that we do want to avoid what promises to be a good old time-wasting muddle.

In an attempt to avoid this I now enclose copies of the only three written comments I have had, namely from Rainer Unwin, Tom Maschler and Marilyn Edwards. These are the only people one would expect to hear from except Martyn Goff, the other people being consulted of course being you, Michael and myself.

On these copies I have written brief comments of my own reactions to the various points raised, and the only point of disagreement in the whole thing is in the second paragraph of Tom's letter. It has never crossed my mind that our rules were made purposely for publishers to bring out their potential prize winners in the autumn. As I have always seen it it is in the very nature of publishing that potential prize winners are brought out then anyway, and the object was to take advantage of this at the same time as getting near simultaneous announcement, and again deriving some experience by keeping an eye on the Goncourt.

Of course if you want to return the ball to me I will be very happy to do my best to get it all sorted out. Meanwhile I am taking it that Michael is right and that you will reply, so I am therefore not ringing up Tom to discuss the only point where

contd./.....

John Murphy, Esq.

14th February, 1972.

disagreement exists. The other good points raised by Tom and the other writers can easily be dealt with by modifying the existing draft.

Yours,



dictated by
Lord Hardinge of Penshurst
signed in his absence

encs.

Copy of letter from Rayner Unwin to Lord Hardinge, dated 8.2.72.

Dear George,

I think your letter to David Holloway is admirable and I have no suggestions to make except, perhaps, that it would be worth spelling out the small concession that we are making (i.e. including August in the period of submission). To a reviewer this might be a small concession as there are a number of reviewing days in August and thus the load can be spread a little more.

good point

Yours sincerely,

Copy of letter from Marilyn Edwards to Lord Hardinge, dated 7.2.72.

Dear George,

Many thanks for your letter to David Holloway. It seems a perfect answer. There is only one point which slightly worried me which is your statement that the French book trade manages to keep up with the situation (Prix Goncourt). It is claimed by many journalists who go over there at the time that there is in fact total chaos, and the book trade more or less comes to a grinding halt during the Prize season. This may be an exaggeration, but I have heard it said by some. I guess our "comfort" is that British phlegm would prevent this happening here, alas?

good point

I am very sorry I was unable to enlighten you at the meeting, but even after the piece in the Times diary on Saturday, I am still not really sure of what is happening, except that the prize will be administered from the NBL.

Yours,

Copy of letter from Tom Maschler to Lord Hardinge, dated 9.2.72.

Dear George,

Thank you for sending me the copy of your letter to David Holloway.

Firstly, I would say that it is dangerous to base your argument on the fact that only one title was actually put back to the autumn on account of the Prize. It may be that David Holloway could produce evidence to the contrary, and then by implication we should go into reverse. Or at least seriously reconsider. But to my mind there's a far more important point than that. Surely our rules were made precisely so that publishers would be induced to bring out their potential prizewinners in the autumn? And now you are arguing the opposite. This point seems to me fundamental to the whole issue and quite apart from whether you and I understand each other (or for that matter agree with

agree. less stress on this.

I don't agree - and if it was the

case we couldn't say so.

each other!) it seems to me essential that the whole of our committee should fully understand what we're doing and why.

One further point concerns the first paragraph on your Page 2. You say that the panel is free to call in novels published from January 1st onwards. That is the case, of course, but I think it is perhaps even more important to underline the fact that the publisher is invited to call the attention of the panel to specific novels published in that period.

agree

I've sent a copy of this to Marilyn and suggest she should forward it to the other Committee members if she sees fit.

Yours ever,