

Miss Marilyn Edwards,
The Publishers Association,
19, Bedford Square,
London, W.C.1.

10th February, 1970.

Dear Marilyn,

Enclosed is a draft for the article to appear in "Bookselling News", which is a joint effort by George and me. Do let me know if you think it is O.K.

Yours ever,

(J. N. Murphy)

Enc:

THE BOOKER PRIZE FOR FICTION

Soon (or just recently) to be published is the short list for The Booker Prize for Fiction. This is the second year of the £5,000 prize for the best novel of the year, written by a Commonwealth, Irish, or South African writer and first published in England during the year (December 1st to November 30th). The first year's prize, won by P.H. Newby's Something to Answer For got off to a good start but it is hoped that this year's prize will do even better. And "do better" means do better in terms of publicity in the Press, T.V. and Radio and in the bookshops, which in turn will lead to sales. Because the aim and object of the Booker Prize is - via publicity and promotion - to increase the sales, not only of the winning book and the short-listed novels, but of all novels.

The idea for the prize was a joint one of the Publishers Association and Booker McConnell. The reasoning of the P.A. is clear. More interesting perhaps is why Bookers decided to finance this project. Bookers main business is in sugar, rum, shopkeeping, shipping and engineering. But there are other diversifications, of which the one best known in the book trade is the association of authors with Bookers in copyright ownership. The first and most famous of these partnerships was between Bookers and the late Ian Fleming.

Bookers interest in books has grown naturally from this. And as the company learned more about the book trade it discovered that there was no literary prize in Britain on a really big scale, or that seemed capable of generating a new interest in fiction and the kind of excitement and sales brought about in France by the Prix Goncourt. They decided to make a spirited effort to rectify this situation, with the whole-hearted support and co-operation of the P.A.

This year's panel to choose the winner is made up of the following five people: David Holloway, literary editor of the Daily Telegraph

Dame Rebecca West, one of last year's judges; Professor Richard Hoggart, author of the Uses of Literacy; Lady Antonia Fraser, author of Mary, Queen of Scots; Ross Higgins of John B. Wylie, President of the Booksellers Association.