

JJM

Note for File

16th November 1971

BOOKER PRIZE

After much chasing, we are finally informed that V. S. Pritchett will be unable to be the guest speaker at the dinner. Pritchett is apparently abroad and will not be back in this country till January of next year.

Why Tom Maschler could not find this out last Wednesday is not clear, but it has wasted a further week and it is now going to be very difficult to find a guest speaker at such short notice.

MJW talks to George Hardinge who is going to discuss the matter with Marilyn Edwards. Hardinge telephones MJW at home and says that he has had a long talk with Marilyn, and, having failed to persuade Rebecca West to be the guest speaker, they both feel it will be impossible to approach any other 'good names' at this late stage. It is suggested that one of the judges should be guest speaker and the obvious candidate is Antonia Fraser. It is proposed that Marilyn will speak to John Gross first and it is felt that since he doesn't like public speaking, he will not agree to be the guest speaker, and this would leave the way open to approach Antonia Fraser.

Marilyn Edwards is going to speak to Martyn Goff first to see if he has any other thoughts on a guest speaker, but it would clearly have to be someone who is a personal friend of one of the Committee.

MJ

17th Nov. Lord Goodman is suggested but he is in Rhodesia.

MJW

M. Goff agrees to approach David Jaich