leave school on passing Standard IV a satisfactory command of reading will not, I think, be disputed by any one conversant with the facts of the case. It seems due in part to the ease and simplicity of the lower reading-books now used in the schools, still more to the want of a sufficiently wide training in the subject, and in some considerable degree to faults of teaching and management. That the narrow range of the reading now overtaken in most schools is a chief cause of this failure is clearly shown at our visits of inspection, when we see the painful process by which fairly fluent and correct reading is secured with much labour by the close of the school year. It is then no unusual experience to find the pupils of the lower classes quite unable to deal with the higher books into which they have lately been advanced with anything like reasonable power or ease. The books, simple though they are, are clearly beyond their reach. Though the pupils get through them after a fashion they are not ready for them, and have little or no interest or satisfaction in trying to master them. Reading thus proves a slow and disheartening process, and what should naturally be the pleasantest and brightest of school tasks comes to be regarded with indifference. The cause of all this difficulty is obvious enough. At the lower stages we fail to give such a thorough and extended training in reading as will insure reasonable ease and readiness in dealing with the books to be taken up at the next stage. This is clearly the root of the difficulty To surmount it, all your Inspectors agree in thinking that the Board should step in and insist on wider reading in the preparatory classes, and on the thorough preparation of two books in each of the standard classes. There would be nothing arbitrary or harsh in enforcing this course. The very books now used have been specially prepared for a system of education under which two books must be read in every Government-aided school throughout England, and three in every similar school throughout Scotland. Is it to be expected that even a good knowledge of half the reading matter that is deemed indispensable in the Mother-country will suffice to give our children a ready command of the reading that should be mastered at each stage of progress? No one can expect anything of the kind. Parents do not want their children merely to read a certain series of simple school-books. They want them trained to read and understand the newspaper, the magazine, books of travel, biographies, histories, novels—everything, in fact, that they may desire or need to learn about. Teachers cannot make bricks without straw any more than others, and they cannot give this training in reading without adequate materials for practice and exercise. If this were understood and realised as it should be we should hear little about the difficulty of getting pupils provided with a sufficient number of reading-books. Continued reluctance or neglect to provide these can, if necessary, be met here, as it is in the Mother-country and in some parts of this colony, by authorising the Inspectors to test the reading by an unseen book, wherever the prescribed amount of reading has not been overtaken. We have the remedy for our failure in this matter in our own hands, and must bear the blame if we shrink from applying it.

Teachers may be inclined to think it impracticable to overtake this additional work, but this impression is quite a mistake. If their pupils were really ready at each stage for the higher books, they would go through them with an ease, rapidity, and satisfaction that would make the thorough learning of two books a far easier and pleasanter task than the learning of one now proves. I know this from the experience of many years, and a reasonable trial will soon convince any unprejudiced person of its truth. It is, indeed, already done without difficulty in certain schools, both large and small.

The want of an adequate grounding in easy reading at the lower stages of school life also tends to make the teaching of it mechanical and unintelligent. So long as pupils cannot deal readily with their daily lessons, teachers are almost constrained to adopt methods of treatment in which artificial forcing and mere sentence-grinding predominate. This is largely the cause of the prevalent abuse of model-reading adverted to above. The difficulty of making out and saying the mere words throws attention to the train of thought of which they are the vesture too much into the background, and makes the work as unfruitful of mental enlightenment as it is wearisome and disheartening. From the point of view of true education, the gain from a more thorough training in reading at each stage would be hard to overestimate.

How far faults of teaching aggravate the difficulties caused by a narrow range of reading I am hardly yet in a position to say In the larger schools they probably do not do so to any great extent, though abuse of model-reading seems more common in these than in others. Still, it is certain that many teachers do not bestow on the subject the care and attention it deserves. The time allowed for it is generally insufficient, and is not turned to the best account. Above all, the pupils do not have sufficient practice in reading, especially in the smaller schools. Interruptions for trivial corrections, for explanations better deferred or withheld, for showing graces of rhetoric, for bringing up a nice point in grammar, for calling somebody to attention, for fifty trifling reasons, are incessant. The continuous reading through of a long paragraph is seldom heard, of a whole lesson never In large classes, simultaneous reading, with or without the teacher's accompaniment, is probably the best way of giving the practice required. This should come at the close of the teaching, and after individual reading has been practised as fully as time permits. In small schools the same method is useful, but it must be supplemented by sending the classes to a lobby or porch, under a monitor, for further practice. Moreover, so far as I can judge, the attention during reading needs to be braced up in schools of every class. Every pupil should be closely following the words which the individual reader utters. They should be mentally reading all the time. The teacher would not do wrong who insisted on seeing mute movements of the lips, in token of genuine attention by every pupil. Mistake-hunting needs to be checked, as it distracts attention, and leads to much waste of time. Good attention can easily be maintained without this undesirable aid if teachers throw living spirit and enthusiasm into their work. On the whole, I cannot but attribute a large part of our failure to teach reading well in the Standard IV and lower classes to indifferent attention and the want of a hearty spirit of work among the pupils.