

Copy

7/52

7 Eliy Place
19.4. '93.

Dear Sir,

Would you kindly lay before the Board on Tuesday next the following, my views on the subject of Readers, for I cannot attend the meeting, but, as I was a member of the Subcommittee on the Fifth Book, I would like my views to be laid before the Board.

In the first place I do not consider the book now sent up at all satisfactory. The lessons were not written for children and are in a stilted old-fashioned style that makes them difficult and repulsive. I tried to get some of the scientific ones rewritten but was told that there was not time. It is most unfortunate that there is not time for the Board which purveys Education for Irish children to provide the best attainable.

Another matter that I cannot endorse is the leaving out of the whole subject of Political

Economy. It is most important that those who have to govern the country in the future should have some dim ideas of what the questions they deal with are like and by giving them a few broad principles should be saved from the more obvious fallacies which are the stock in trade of so many political charlatans. The lessons as I understand have been left out because a few sentences have been objected to by Trades Unionists and by Archbishop Walsh. This is not a sufficient reason for omitting all notice of this most important subject. As only 7 per cent of our children read the Sixth Book it will not meet the case to put some lessons on the subject into the new Sixth Book.

I would impress upon the Board the fact that many of our other readers are as bad as this one and that this is one of the reasons why the Inspectors with one consent condemn the reading in our schools as unintelligent. It is a matter of the most serious importance

and

and is called attention to by every one, except one, of our Inspectors. There are only two alternatives. Either our Inspectors are bad or the schools are bad, and it is almost certain that it is the latter and that the badness of the schools in this respect is largely due to the badness of our Readers.

7/52 In England there has been a most useful competition amongst Readers and the ones that have survived are those which teachers have as a matter of fact found to teach reading most effectively. There the Inspector tests the school in reading by means of unseen passages, so that the competition amongst the Readers is a fair competition as to which teacher reads best. It is hopeless for us to expect to provide anything so good as is produced by this kind of competition unless we permit the same kind of competition here.

The Board cannot undertake to issue a whole lot of series of Readers to be competed for and to meet the varying requirements of town and County

Country, north, south, east, and west, sea-coast
and mountain, manufacturing and
Agricultural districts. It is sufficient that
we provide one good and cheap set and
authorise any number of other competing Readers
that do not contain objectionable matter.

There are objections to every Reader yet produced
by man, but it is infinitely more important that
the schools should suit themselves than that
we should save them from Readers that don't
contain as much about Ireland as we would
like and so forth.

But we should provide one good and cheap
set of Readers and the ones we at present
provide are only cheap and bad.

Yours very faithfully

7/52

(Signed)

Geo Fran Fitzgerald