

zealous teacher for the purpose sometime of obtaining a higher rate of progress on the part of his school, or at other times for compelling greater application on the part of dilatory pupils. As a matter of law the right to prescribe home lessons at all is prescriptive, and I shall not say, therefore, that a teacher has no authority to assign home lessons. Where, however, the parent sends a written notice to the teacher asking his child to be excused from home work, or where it is evident to the teacher that the work of the schoolroom is a sufficient strain upon the mental energies of the pupil, no home lessons can be prescribed or should be prescribed. The State asks a minimum of five hours of study on the part of every child attending a Public School, and permits only a maximum of six hours. On this basis the State makes an appropriation for the maintenance of such schools. The teacher has the right to insist upon reasonable application and diligence during these hours. If tasks to be fulfilled in addition to these hours are prescribed, the teacher's authority can only be enforced with the implied concurrence of the parent. Where that concurrence is withdrawn by the parent the authority of the teacher lapses. As a matter of law, I would not say that tasks might not be assigned occasionally by way of discipline, if, in the teacher's judgment, it is the most effective way of securing greater application on the part of the pupil. Nor would I wish you to entertain the idea for one moment that I think home lessons are not useful, and, if of the proper character, perfectly safe so far as the pupil's health is concerned. In this, as in many other matters, much must be left to the judgment of the teacher. You have already considered in the Normal School the kind of lesson to be assigned for home study. I may say in a word such lessons should generally involve merely the

exercise of memory and observation. Practice in reading the lessons of the day or in preparing the reading lesson of to-morrow; practice in spelling; the examination of a map with a view to improve a knowledge of geography; the careful reading of a few pages of history, and of other lessons which simply adds to a pupil's previous knowledge, or which, by repetition, is supposed to impress his memory permanently, are proper home lessons. Difficult problems in arithmetic should never be assigned for home study. Practice in speed and accuracy in the elementary rules is quite defensible, but the solution of problems too difficult for the child to solve without assistance, or in fact the solution of any problem not within easy reach of the child's attainments, should be studiously avoided. I think, were we to examine the complaints with regard to home lessons, it would be found that the tasks in arithmetic are responsible for the greater part of such complaints. You may say that unless home lessons are prescribed your pupils will not advance as quickly as they otherwise would. That may be, and I must not be understood as prohibiting the assignment of such lessons, but as merely indicating that they are not prescribed by the regulations, that even when ordered by the teacher any parent has the right to request their non-enforcement in the case of his child, and, thirdly, that where they are assigned they should be of such a character as to increase the pupil's interest in school work rather than to discourage it.

"Let me conclude with a few words about examinations. I need make no defence for examinations in connection with school work. In no country in the world are schools conducted without examinations, and, so far as I know, in no country in the world do teachers forget the fact that a certain number of their pupils, if not all, will