

1975

P R O C E E D I N G S
of the
NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION
35th Annual Convention

Invited Speaker:
Mr. Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Topic:
A Teacher's Organization Leader Looks at the
Role of School Boards in the 1970's

Convention Center
Miami Beach, Florida
April 20, 1975

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A "Special Session for an Invited Address" of the National School Boards Association convened in Room 100 of the Convention Center, Miami Beach, Florida, Sunday morning, April 20, 1975, and was called to order at 11:00 o'clock a.m. by Mr. William Poe.

MR. WILLIAM POE: I realize some of you are not seated. There are a few seats over on the far right and if you people, if you move over around this -- quietly, if you will. I am afraid some of you are going to have to stand. We'd like to get under way because we have a rather tight schedule.

My name is Bill Poe. I am a member of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina School Board. It is my privilege to chair the "Invited Addresses" series at this convention.

The "Invited Addresses" are new to the NSBA convention this year as part of an effort to expand and diversify the programming made available to you. Yesterday was the first in the series.

Our speaker, Dr. James Guthrie, unfortunately was not able to appear because of travel difficulties in Chicago. Win Smith, former president of the NSBA, delivered the first of the "Invited Addresses." Today we have our speaker here and on schedule.

All of us are increasingly aware of the role being played by teachers' organizations in the governance of public education. For better or worse, it is a reality with which we must deal, whether in mutually working together in a problem-solving atmosphere, in the confrontation at the bargaining table, or in Congress in the struggle concerning a national collective bargaining bill.

There is probably no one in the United States who better symbolizes or who can better articulate the desires and aspirations of the organized teacher movement than Albert Shanker.

Although he hasn't won any popularity contests among school board members, we believe it is important for us to know him better and for him to know us better. Today we have that opportunity.

Mr. Shanker is serving concurrently as president of the American Federation of Teachers, president of the New York City United Federation of Teachers, and executive vice-president of the New York State United Teachers.

Under his leadership, the New York City Teachers Union has grown from about 40,000 to 80,000 members and now includes school secretaries, para-professionals, guidance counselors, and five other groups of school employees in addition to teachers. It may be significant to point out that New York City teachers can now receive a maximum salary of \$20,350 in just seven and one-half years.

Mr. Shanker was educated in New York City public schools and at the University of Illinois. He had completed all requirements for a Ph.D. at Columbia University except for the thesis when financial pressure forced him to drop out of

the program.

Despite his heavy leadership responsibilities in the organized teacher movement, Mr. Shanker is active in a great many civic groups. He has written many articles and is in great demand as a speaker and for appearances on radio and television programs.

There will not be time for questions or for "equal time" comments today. (Laughter)

If you find yourself in disagreement with the speaker, we will not be surprised. Save your ammunition -- you may confront him or his organization at a later time.

I now present Mr. Albert Shanker, who will address us on the topic "A Teacher's Organization Leader Looks at the Role of School Boards in the 1970's." Mr. Shanker. (Applause)

MR. ALBERT SHANKER: Thank you very much, and welcome to the first "Meet Your Enemy" program at this convention!

I come here to share with you some concerns about public education in this country:

where it is going, what is happening, some of the attacks which are leveled against all of us, and to talk about some of the things that perhaps can be done together, teachers and administrators and school board members. I have these concerns in a number of areas.

First and foremost is the very obvious fact that within the last decade or so there has been perhaps the greatest change in public attitudes toward our school systems that has ever taken place.

If I can oversimplify a bit, I think that throughout most of our history the general belief of the public was that the public schools of our country were a very basic, great, important institution. They saw us as a nation of immigrants, a nation that started as a wilderness, ^{but} which, within a very short period of time from an historic perspective, was able to become the nation with the greatest talent, technology, wealth, and world power; and much of this was attributed to the fact that we provided education.

I know that when I was growing up and going to school, that the attitude of my parents about school and what school would mean to me and for my sister, was something that was not a feeling in my family alone. It was very general.

Now there's been a very great change. That very positive feeling about the schools has, to a large extent, been turned around. And it's been turned around for a number of reasons.

Ironically, the greatest reason is probably because of the success of the public schools. There is no longer the tremendous educational gap that once existed between the general public and teachers.

It was only a short time ago that a person with an elementary school certificate was considered a fairly well-educated person, or a person with a little bit of high school or high school graduation, a very well-educated person. And so throughout most of our history the teacher

was part of a small, educated elite.

And now because so many have gone to school and so many have gone to college, many of us live in communities where ~~no longer is~~ the teacher ^{is no longer} among the most educated. Rather, today many parents feel that they might do a better job of educating their children than the teachers are doing -- except they are too busy making more money at other jobs, so they can't afford to do that.

But instead of looking up at the teacher, they either look straight at them, or down. No longer is that educational gap there.

And there have been some other factors. We have gone through a period of 10 or 15 years of the literature of the counter-culture. Go into any bookstore and take a look at that three or four or five feet of books, relatively new books, in the field of education.

I don't have to repeat the list of authors, but you know what those books have said. They say essentially ^{that} the schools are a bureaucratic

structure, that everything within ~~it~~^{them} is designed not to help or educate, but ~~they~~ essentially ^{to} destroy children and their spontaneity, ~~and we~~^{to} destroy their love of learning; ^{that} we do not help children in attaining equality, but rather we do the very opposite; that the function of the schools is to convince those from certain groups and certain classes that they are stupid, ~~and that~~ they are no good and they can't advance, ~~and~~^{to} convince them it is their own fault rather than ours.

And so we have book after book -- fortunately, most people don't read ~~those~~^{the} books -- but ~~these~~^{these} books have had great influence.

If you think of practically all of the presentations on education that have been made on programs like the "Today Show," ~~why~~⁻⁻⁻ every three weeks there is some new author of one of these books, someone who gets on and says, "I was a teacher for 12 weeks and it was terrible. They wouldn't let me be creative. And down the hall I watched the principal beating teachers, and down the other hall I watched the teachers beating

children, and down the other hall I saw something else. And when I said something about it, they fired me. And now I have opened up my own creative child school in my garage. My three children and I have a wonderful time and love each other. I'd like the federal government to provide me with vouchers so I can have my own wonderful school and be creative."

It sounds great -- the teachers are wicked and education ^{is} evil and the whole thing is a kind of conspiracy. When you see it on television it has an effect.

I think something else has had an effect, and that is the constant pressure for American public schools to innovate. Innovation, that is the big thing. God forbid that anybody should do the same thing twice; it would be terrible!

Just think of what would happen if you went to the doctor, something was wrong, and the doctor said, "I know exactly what is wrong. I know exactly what every other doctor would do

cure it. I am not licensed to do the same thing all the time. I am going to innovate". ~~we~~ you'd probably run pretty fast.

You know, every educational experiment is doomed to success and we keep trying things. We always evaluate them positively. That is another thing -- I think the public more and more realizes that we couldn't have all those successful experiments, something somewhere must have gone wrong. And that in any field where there is ^{an} ~~the~~ inability to admit failure so that no one else will ever die of the same cure again, there is something wrong.

The biggest innovation of them all is that every few years we get rid of our school superintendent and we hire one that is being fired from some other community. (Applause)

You know, if we are to regain some confidence I think instead of constantly stressing that we are trying to do something new because we don't know what we are doing, we ought to admit that there are some things we do not know how to do.

And there is nothing wrong with doing something wrong with something that works over and over again. There is nothing sacred about doing something new for the sake of novelty.

I think something else wrong is *that* we live in a world of full disclosure. The general public is not able to cope with all of ~~this~~ *what* that comes its way. Every year we get the amazing headlines that half the children in the United States of America are below average in reading -- absolutely shocking! And we get educators running all across the country saying, "If I had my way I would have a system where everyone would be above average."

Well -- but that is exactly what comes up in meeting after meeting. I think we have also suffered because of the conflicts that have taken place between teachers and administrators and school board members, school boards.

In our conflicts -- whether it be over specific pieces of legislation, whether it be ~~on~~ *on* our tenure issues or collective bargaining or on

something else -- each side believes that it can gain strength if it weakens the other side. . And so each side says some pretty horrible things.

And school board people and administrators say the teachers are no good, they are not able, ~~and~~ they are incompetent, they don't work long enough, and all those things. *then teachers* The others turn *on* school board members and what they do and their conflicts and how they *bungle* ~~make~~ the system. And then we all do the same with the administrators.

You know, I would say that we have all been remarkably successful in convincing the public of how terrible we all are. They believe all of us when we say these bad things. They have gotten to the point they not only believe us, but when we come to ask for more help for the schools they use the very ammunition which we have used against each other as the reason why the schools are a poor investment and why they need not give more.

I would suggest in years to come, which will be difficult years, that whenever we

have the urge to engage in attacks on each other, that we think twice whether the attack might not also have a negative effect on what we ourselves are trying to do.

Last week in my piece in the New York Times -- (applause) -- last week in my piece in the New York Times I criticized -- I hope not your organization or you -- but the recent study which you publicized about attitudes toward school boards and their doings. And no one has yet noticed that my criticism was a strange one perhaps for a leader of a teacher organization.

I was just angry as anything when I read that stuff that came out and I was angry because I spend a good deal of my life in Washington, D. C. trying to convince Congressmen that instead of giving educational monies to private institutions, instead of giving ^{it to} separate child care agencies, instead of giving it to museums and people who take care of children, instead of giving it to anti-poverty agencies, -- as far as money dealing with the education and care of

children, it should go through the school systems of America because we have developed a system of governance through school boards which will work, and which is permanent.

What I was so angry about, I was going there telling every Congressman, "This is the way it has to go. When you set up a new agency you are going to have ten years of conflict. And people -- If you look at what happened in many of these new agencies in the last 15 years, it is a scandal over what happens to money, a scandal over who gets hired and fired, and the public loses interest in that particular idea, and the War on Poverty is dismantled and this is dismantled. The one thing that has stood the test of time has been the system of governance in the public schools."

And I felt that our case before the Congress of the United States in taking new programs and putting them through the public schools was seriously jeopardized when we go out and say that "The public doesn't know much about the school boards and doesn't have their confidence," or

something else.

The negative results of this research, which raise such troubling questions, are going to make it far more difficult to gain the additional funds we must have--or to do anything else we want and need to do.

The research itself may be entirely accurate today; but I want it to become inaccurate tomorrow. I want public attitudes to change: to reflect, once more, that positive view of school boards that has prevailed through most of the history of American public education. That positive view would help you; it would help teachers; and it would help children.

No longer a shortage of teachers, a decline of student population with about 800,000 fewer students enrolled in schools each year as far down as we can see. It means many things.

It means there will be many who wanted to be teachers who will be looking for jobs elsewhere. It means ^{cut backs in} ~~that~~ school administrators, ^{and supervisors} ~~supervision administration~~. It means that school boards are already facing the conflict

within each community ^{as to} of which school to close down. And of course, the pressures are always on purely educational grounds, with each parent wanting the school farthest away from his or her child closed down.

These are some of the problems. They are problems that can be worked on together. I think if we look at the last 30 years from the period of the end of World War II to the present time, American public schools have had a great challenge, a challenge of educating millions upon millions, building new schools, finding and training new teachers and administrators, accepting many new responsibilities, recognizing that poverty has a tremendous effect on the schools' need to compensate, recognizing the effects of discrimination, opening up the doors of higher education, and moving education downward to what is practically now universal kindergarten.

This was a tremendous struggle to deal with the problems of quantity over these 30 years. But all of us have known throughout this

period of time that while we were busy grabbing that college student before ~~that~~ ^{he} person was even trained and putting him into the classroom while we were troubled with double sessions and triple sessions, we knew that while we were doing the best that we possibly could, that there were many things that we could not do.

I remember sitting with ~~our~~ ^{the} superintendent of ~~the~~ ^{our} board of education in the early days of collective bargaining and talking about some of the things that we wanted to do.

We talked about the idea that there should be kindergarten available for all children. At that time in the city it was not so. The board and the superintendent agreed, ^{not} that it was bargainable, but they agreed to the idea that it would be good to have smaller classes than what we had at that particular time.

They agreed on many things with us. But in almost every case they said, "It is impossible. We don't have the space for the programs we now have, we have got children on double and

triple sessions. We don't have the personnel. We open schools each year with a shortage of fifty teachers here, a hundred there. In some of the big cities the headlines were 'Three Thousand Teachers Needed.' We can't do these things; we don't have the people, we don't have the space."

Well, now we have the people, and we have the space. And there are things that we always knew we should be doing.

Let's take a look at the research of recent years. Almost all of that points to the fact that more than half of the intellectual development of human beings takes place between the age of two and a half and five -- that is, they learn to speak and learn number concepts, develop socially and intellectually.

The only dispute at the present time is not whether that period of time is crucial in human development, the only dispute is whether the child ^{has} ~~does not have~~ a rich enough environment during that period of time, whether the damage that is done can ~~or cannot~~ be overcome by some form of

compensation in later years.

Well, we now have an opportunity. We have the space, we have the people. We have an opportunity to develop in this country universal early childhood education on a voluntary basis, not compulsory. But if it is made voluntary kindergarten has shown that it will be universal and it will be taken on a voluntary basis by most people. We have the space.

For school boards, it means they don't have to sell schools. It means they don't have to worry about facilities not being used, and you do not have to worry about a conflict within the community as to which school to shut down, the one at this end of town or the one at that end of town.

For many parents and for many in the women's rights movement this is something that is necessary, i.e., providing the opportunity, whether it be additional education or return to work or for leisure. For the children it is a great educational opportunity. For teachers it

is an opportunity for employment in their own field.

There really are not many teachers unemployed in the sense that you don't find masses of teachers waiting out there for jobs. There are many who want to be teachers who are not teachers, but teachers find other jobs and the people who would have had those other jobs find jobs at a level that is different than what they were at.

What happens in this economic system of ours is that the people with the lower skills at the bottom are the ones who get pushed out and are unemployed, but the teachers are not unemployed. It is just that they are not being utilized to their full ability.

Here is something that can be done. There is before the Congress of the United States right now a great fight that is taking place. Mondale and ~~Brandmews~~ ^{Brandmew} (phonetic) have introduced legislation for early childhood day care. And that bill provides that states and cities may be the prime sponsors.

It will allow "Kentucky Fried ^{Chicken} Children" to develop a private -- which ~~they are~~ ^{one person has} ~~described~~ as "Kentucky Fried ⁱⁿ Children^s" ~~one person~~ ~~said~~ -- which will allow them to develop private, for-profit early childhood and day care centers.

But the legislation introduced by these ^o Congressmen and dozens of others does not provide for prime sponsorship for boards of education in America. I think that is one of the grossest insults to American education that has ever hit us -- that as a vast expansion of public education for our children is being considered by the Congress of the United States, ~~as~~ the one institution which has successfully managed public education throughout our history is not ^{even} considered in the legislation for prime sponsorship.

Now this is something that we should be working on together. If there is to be an expansion of education in this country, and I believe that there should be, that expansion should take place where it will be successful, where there is a system of governance. It shouldn't become

another anti-poverty program only for the poor.

We found out in our society that anything that is only for the poor generally doesn't last very long. No one cares about the quality and it is phased out soon afterwards.

So early childhood education has to be something for everybody -- not a charitable thing for those who are poor, but something that is a basic right for everybody; the same as public education, something for everybody in this country, ^{as} ~~is~~ a basic right. (Applause)

Now there are other things that we ought to be doing during this next period. Most of us have recognized that teacher training in this country has been very poor. There is no necessary relationship between getting good marks in college and being a good teacher. There is no necessary relationship between passing an examination and being a good teacher.

It is a fine thing to have a teacher who has done well in college, and it is a good thing for a math teacher to know mathematics and

a social studies teacher to know social studies. And those things can be tested. They should be requirements and they should be tested.

But one does not select a concert pianist on the basis of someone getting a Ph.D. in music. You don't get a part in a Shakespearean play by getting a master's degree in English.

Being a teacher requires having a rather complicated set of performance skills -- things that some people, not very many, have naturally; things that others can learn. But what teachers have needed for a very long period of time is something that is the equivalent of the internship period that doctors go through, a period of time in between college graduation on the one hand and taking full charge of a class on the other; a period of time when they would not just be thrown in with a group of children and told "Sink or swim, take charge immediately."

It would be a period of time in which they would be interns, in which they would work under the supervision of more experienced

teachers to learn the practical tricks of the trade which teachers have, how you move about the room, how you help some children on an individual basis, even how you use your voice -- because being a teacher is sort of a combination of being a parent, a psychologist, a jailer, an actor or actress, a combination of these things.

Once again, a few years ago when we spoke to some boards of education on this question of an internship period for teachers, they said, "Well, it is a terrific idea but we can't do it. We can't spare the services of these young people while they are training for one or two or three years. We have got to grab them immediately because there are 30 children sitting in that room and another 30 in this room and another 30 in that one -- we can't take X number of teachers and have them spend three years training."

Now, what is wrong, instead of having people out there collecting \$8,000 a year in unemployment insurance and Medicaid and looking at a mirror every morning and being miserable --

because unemployment not only affects your economic well-being but affects the way you feel about yourself and your feeling as to whether or not anyone needs you and wants you -- why not say to people that instead of weeks or months or years of unemployment, that during that period of time this is a period when you can become trained so that when you do go into the classroom to work with children you will have the practical experience and know-how.

And by the way, that would be the way of selecting teachers. That would be a good probationary period. Give the person -- don't select on the basis of scores, select on the basis of actual performance. But after the person has had an opportunity to be trained in the performance. That is the second thing that we ought to be doing.

I think there is a third thing. This deals mainly with higher education, but I want to talk about it. We have in this country some very healthy instincts. We do not believe that a single mistake that a person makes should

put that person's life or career or reputation in jeopardy forever.

Even when people commit crimes, the first time we catch them they say, "Well, that was the first time." And the second time we say, "Well, let's give them a little bit of help and counseling." And the third time we do something else. It takes an awful lot in our society for us to become convinced that someone has made so many errors that ~~they~~^{he} should never again get another chance.

But there is one field in our society where people don't really get a second chance. Make a mistake once in your education, drop out of high school, or graduate high school and go out to work, don't go to college, and what are the chances that you will ever be able to return to school once you have made that decision?

~~And in our society~~ the chances are practically zero. Once that error is made we make it almost impossible, [^] we make it impossible, [^] for the worker in the factory or the fellow at the gas

station or the fellow who is a clerk in a store who says, "Gee, I am so sorry. I fell in with a bad bunch of friends, I dropped out at that time. And now instead of having that particular job or instead of being able to do this which my other friends who went on to school, which they are doing; here I am doing this. I don't enjoy the job, it is a dead end, I am not making much," ~~that's~~ ^{is} it.

Well, why not ~~within our society~~ have a provision which allows ~~people throughout~~ ~~their lives~~ periodically sabbaticals for everyone, ~~throughout life --~~ in a sense the right to return to school, whether it be a vocational school, whether it be college, or whether it be in some other program.

You know, we once did that in this country. It was called the G.I. Bill of Rights. Here they were, millions of soldiers coming back. We did it for two reasons: one, we wanted to say thank you for the sacrifices that they had made; but the other thing is, we were afraid there'd be another depression in the country if all those

millions of soldiers came back and there ^{were} ~~'d be~~ no jobs for them. We said, "Instead of seeing Americans on street corners, let them go to college."

We created the opportunities for college. That was the most mature generation of college graduates that this country has ever known. These weren't immature kids who didn't know what the outside world was like. They were people who had lived and struggled, who had been employed or unemployed, who knew the importance of another year of education. They were serious students.

That opportunity to go to college was a tremendous opportunity and made a tremendous difference in their own lives. But it also made a difference in our lives. Where would this country have been through the 1950's and 1960's without the millions of people who became the doctors and the lawyers and the dentists and the mathematicians and computer specialists and teachers?

Our society would have been second rate in terms of productivity, it would have been second rate in terms of our ability to build our

nation if we had not made that investment in those G.I.'s.

Well, why stop? Why ~~say~~^{give} that only those who go overseas or who fight in a war? Why not say that anyone who's been ~~out~~^{at} to work a certain number of years and is now disgusted with a particular job and says, "I am willing to go back and learn to become something else," why not create that opportunity for these millions of Americans?

Would it cost so much more than ~~the~~ keeping ~~of~~ millions of Americans on unemployment insurance right now at \$8,000 a year? Instead of sitting at home and feeling rotten and feeling unwanted and feeling that you can't do anything well, send eight million people who want to go back to school to upgrade their skills and abilities and their enjoyment and appreciation of life.

Now these are concepts that we ought to be working on. Unfortunately, these are not the things that we spend most of our time on. We spend a lot of time fighting about things like collective bargaining. I will only spend a few minutes on that.

Just before I entered this room I went to a press conference and there I was asked the question, which started with the words "Teachers in the United States of America now want to take over the governance of public schools."

Well, nothing could be further from the truth. Teachers in collective bargaining need management, they need school boards, they need some superintendents, they need principals. Collective bargaining would be absolutely meaningless if we only had to deal with ourselves. As a matter of fact, we need you. (Laughter and applause)

If you have followed the newspapers and magazines recently, you will notice that throughout Europe there is a great deal of what is called worker participation in management and many places where worker councils do a great many things. And you will find that by and large the American labor movement has been opposed to the idea that unions and workers should have representatives on management or should play that sort of a role.

And we opposed it for a very good reason. We think that on certain issues there will always be a difference between us -- and there is nothing wrong with that.

Your job in managing the schools, one of your functions is to get rid of people who are incompetent. And one of our functions is not to say that there are no incompetents, but just to demand that each person who is accused of being incompetent has a day in court.

So you must in certain roles play the prosecutor and we must be the attorney for the defense. And for us to be the same would provide a conflict of interest. It would also mean that both labor and management would not be able to serve in their proper roles.

I don't want you to have any role in influencing the union, and you should want us not to have a role in controlling the governing of school boards. I think that is perfectly proper, it is a good relationship. (Applause)

And I might say that the very same

issues that you are talking about now as to whether unions ^{will eliminate or take over your} come, ~~you are not going to have any func-~~ tion, ^{will} or ~~they are going to~~ tell you or dictate ^{to you} what to do -- those very discussions took place in every industry in America years ago.

When Henry Ford bitterly fought the introduction of unionism in the plants he said, "They are going to tell us what to do, whether we should put tail pipes ~~parts~~ on cars or whether we should have convertibles, and what the color of the car should be."

All of that turned out to be ridiculous. It turned out the union was interested in higher wages, shorter hours, grievance procedure, supplemental unemployment and benefits, but they were not interested in determining the product or the quality or the shape itself or its color or anything else. And that has been true in industry after industry.

It should also be said that in every industry which unionized in the tens and twenties and thirties and forties, the initial reaction of

management was that if the union comes in with seniority and tenure and other job retention systems that the industry will go down, it will be destroyed because it will be dominated by incompetent^{ce} -- and the industry will be unable to make the changes that it is supposed to make.

Well, it hasn't happened. America has become the richest nation in the world. We are more productive, our auto industry is not less productive than the British or German or French or Japanese or industries elsewhere.

We are a very productive society and we have managed to be productive and at the same time^{to} ~~acknowledged~~ the rights of employees to sit and bargain on salaries and on their working conditions. That is really all that we are talking about in collective bargaining. We are not talking about making educational policy.

I remember when I first started traveling across the country -- we obtained collective bargaining in New York City in 1961 -- and sometimes the school board members were

principals and many times school principals were there and school superintendents. Their point of view was, "You will now take over the schools, shut the schools down and dictate. There is no longer any purpose, we won't have any voice at all."

Well, I don't know of any place where teachers have dictated a curriculum, where they have said, "Remove French and put in driver education;" where ~~we~~^{they} have said, "Only the following textbooks can be used;" where they have said, "We must have automatic promotion" or "We must have students left back if they don't meet a certain grade level."

I don't know of any place where there has been collective bargaining on the question of whether a student should be track or not track, whether he should be ⁱⁿ a homogeneous or heterogeneous grouping.

There is a simple reason why teachers are not going to bargain on this issue. That is because teachers disagree on these things just as much as you do. Therefore, they will not

introduce into their organization matters which would break them asunder, because they would end up fighting about being left back or ^{about} homogeneous or heterogeneous ~~issues~~. *groupings*.

There are certain issues on which teachers agree. They all want more money. On those issues they will bargain. But on issues that are public matters of controversy, they will not bargain.

Now I would hope, I would hope that given the problems ahead of us, the problems not only of declining student enrollment but the problem of a deteriorating image for public education, the problem of a tremendous squeeze in terms of money and the fact that federal monies are not coming out -- look what's happened in the last few years.

Revenue sharing monies, big, [↑]\$6 or \$7 billion. How much do the public schools get? Very little. Why didn't we get it? I will tell you. We were busy fighting each other.

Your main bit down there is stopping

the collective bargaining bill. My main bit is something else. If we had gotten together -- the public school employees in this country are 50 percent of the non-federal employees in this country -- we could have gone out and \$3 billion of that \$6 billion money would have been ours. As a matter of fact, we might have been able to put into the bill a proportionate -- as a matter of fact, whether it be revenue sharing money or any other federal money, ^{it} has to be allocated to public education in proportion ^{to what we} as we employees spend ~~money~~ in the public sector.

We lost out on that. We will lose out on billions of dollars in early childhood education unless we get together. Our collective bargaining doesn't take the schools away, it just says something very simple -- it gives teachers the legal right to sit down, present you with demands; it gives you the right to reject them. And eventually both sides become more reasonable. (Laughter)

And you end up with an agreement. And the agreement, by the way, is something which

is doing something for management as well as for the teacher organization.

It is no longer a case of poor morale because the teachers are working under something where they say "They did it to us," because when the teacher organization leader signs that contract or that agreement, he can't blame those conditions on you. At least half of it is his fault, otherwise he shouldn't have signed it. And the teacher organization then takes pride in the development of that agreement.

But it does something else, it does something else. We talked before about bringing changes about within a school system. You know it is very difficult to bring change about. And the main reason it is difficult to bring changes about is every time change is brought about people are afraid they will be hurt -- maybe they will lose their jobs, maybe their working conditions will change, maybe they will have to change all the things they have been doing and have become accustomed to all their lives and develop a totally

different set of habits and ways of acting.

People pay a price for this change. And so when you have a weak teacher organization, a teacher organization with tremendous quarrels inside of it, every single thing that you do as a board of education or that you as administrators propose immediately becomes something which the teachers have to attack, and they have to attack largely because they are constantly trying to convince their own members that it is worthwhile paying dues to the organization and it is worth paying dues because every time you propose something they are going to attack it and they are going to stop you from getting it done. That is how they can convince their members that they are doing a worthwhile job.

It is not a constructive process. By engaging in collective bargaining you give a teachers' organization a certain amount of strength and confidence. You give them the confidence of teachers so that on a hundred other issues where you want to bring about changes, the

teachers' organization no longer feels that every single day on every issue that it is unable to reach compromises.

As a matter of fact, in a collective bargaining process some of the changes which you want to bring about you ought to put on the table and say, "If you want more money and if you want this and that, here are some of the things that we want," and you bring it about by agreement. Collective bargaining is a two-way process.

And I will say that in the early days and years of collective bargaining there necessarily is a certain amount of bitterness, and warfare and struggle seems to be born into it.

In the early days of bargaining teachers may very well have unrealistically high expectations of what can be produced by the bargaining process. And school board members and superintendents are not yet used to dealing on equal terms. So you have got some pretty stiff people on both sides. They have got to go through some conflicts that are unpleasant.

But take a look at those states where there's been collective bargaining for a decade. Look at New York State. Can anyone say that the school boards in New York State are weaker than the school boards in the rest of the country?

I don't believe that. I would say they are in many ways stronger, that the collective bargaining process in industry has compelled industry to become technologically more productive in order to meet some of the demands of the unions. And within ~~the~~ school systems and within the public sector generally collective bargaining has generally meant a toughening and a shaping up and a greater efficiency on the part of management.

I would hope that over the next ten years that your opposition to the procedural right of teachers to sit down and negotiate with you ~~a~~ a process which gives you the right to accept or reject but which gives the teachers the right to sit down and to talk and to ask that we will not have a fight over this ~~that~~ that that will be dropped.

And I would hope that in the years

to come we ^{will} devote our energies to trying to reverse this negative image of public education, that we ~~would~~ ^{will} try to change the economics of our field, and that we ~~would~~ ^{will} do as much to try to do better for the children by making sure that those funds which are going to be coming through Washington -- and they will be coming, large new programs -- the question is, will they be used in a worthwhile way? Will they be used to improve the education of children?

Let's take a look at some of the problems -- one or two -- that we face and how schools have contributed and how schools can undo.

I talked a while ago about reaching children when they are young. Is there any question about that? Is there any question that if a child in the first grade or the second grade, who doesn't know his multiplication tables, that if at some point in the first or second grade, if we didn't wait until that child were in the fifth or sixth or seventh grade, but in the first grade, an adult could sit down with that child for three or

four hours just to drill the child on multiplication tables, that it is hard to find a child, who cannot in three hours master those? And that makes a tremendous difference for the next 10 or 11 or 12 years in terms of that child's attitude, for one hour a day, while taking mathematics instruction.

But we don't do that. We wait until the child is in the fifth or sixth grade and then the child no longer believes that he or she can learn. The child has been to a school with a teacher who, with books and a blackboard, the child is still functionally illiterate, can't read, write or count. Then you get the reaction of those children.

There is one group of them which, they sit in the back of the room or either read comic books or fall asleep. They say to the teacher, "You leave me alone and I will leave you alone. But I am really not part of school."

The other kind of child deeply resents being forced to sit through year after year not learning. They become violent, disruptive

and prevent the other children from learning.

We could be teaching them early, but we ~~don't~~ ^{aren't}. We think we are an intelligent society. We save a few hundred dollars when the child is in kindergarten and in the first and second grade we save that money on their education because it is too high a price to pay for two or three hours of individual instruction at a time when it is crucial.

We wait for the child to leave school as a functional illiterate, and then we support that child throughout life on six or seven or eight thousand dollars a year of public assistance for the next 50 years. Figure it out, what we spend.

That child produces nothing as an adult, lives off of others, feels terrible. We spend money in crime protection running after ~~them~~ ^{him}. We spend it in terms of additional health services. We spend in our society -- just last September when I was at the White House for a day for one of those early summits with President Ford -- he had a booklet there which was a digest of the United States

annual budget. And he said, "We have just got to stop these spending programs. Look what we are looking at. It's got to stop." He said, "It's got to stop this year."

A number of us had the opportunity to talk with him. At one point I had the opportunity. I said, "Mr. President, look at the very last page of this budget -- \$30 billion in welfare, food stamps, and unemployment insurance -- \$30 billion, and mounting. This year it is going to be \$50 billion.

"All that money represents our failure to reach children when they were five, six, seven years old. If we had spent a little more money then, you could reduce over a period of time that \$30 billion a year."

Well, these are things we can do. It is not impossible. I can tell you that in many places it is happening.

Once upon a time you read about the threat of a strike in New York City every three months. *Not only hasn't they been* There hasn't been *not only* a strike or a

threat of a strike since ~~1958~~¹⁹⁶⁸ -- ~~but~~^{developed} we have a cooperative relationship with our central board, ~~and~~^{and} with most of our community boards. ~~With~~^W our superintendents ~~on a statewide basis~~^{we also} we are beginning to develop ~~a~~^a relationships in some areas there.

Cooperative ~~a~~ If we could have a strong school boards association, a strong unified teachers' union, we haven't put ours together yet, we still spend most of our money fighting each other while the schools are going down -- after we have finished with that fight there may not be much left to fight over, if we keep it up.

If school board members, teachers, administrators, pull together in the next few years, we have enough political power ~~spread~~^{spread} as we are throughout this country and representing so many ~~to~~^{to} be able to do in public schools what this country has never done before. ~~As~~^{As} If we don't, there will be problems ahead as there is greater and greater decline, and ~~there are~~^{as} other public agencies ~~to~~^{to} put themselves together politically and fight for the public dollar and start taking

away some of what is already ours.

I am here to indicate ~~my~~ not only willingness but ^{my} eagerness to meet with you and to work with you. I hope that you will do the same, because in spite of the new vision of public education which is not so great, it is my belief and I know it is yours, that this is the institution which has made America great, and we have got to stay with it. Thank you very much. (Loud applause)

MR. POE: Thank you, Al Shanker, for your provocative and interesting presentation.

Mr. Shanker's presentation was taped and will be available on a cassette shortly after the convention. If you would like a copy of this address as well as other convention speeches, stop by and order it at the cassette sales booth in the registration area.

The next "Invited Address" will be given by Dr. Gordon Cawelti in this room tonight at 6:00 p.m. The topic will be "The Board's Concern for Curriculum."

The second general session of the

convention begins at 2:30 p.m. The featured speaker will be George Gallup of the Gallup Organization.

Thank you very much for your attention.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 11:50 o'clock a.m.)

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