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American trade movement, because Al has been here to help us grow.

I think the best way to describe Al to you is to quote the words of the Charlie Cogan Teacher Union Award that was recently presented to Al at the UFT's 25th anniversary. The award said -- it was presented for the brilliance of his leadership, the excitement of his imagination, the strength of his convictions, the depth of his commitment, his personal sacrifice in building our union, and for the pleasure of his company.

I am proud to present to you our next speaker, the President of the American Federation of Teachers, Al Shanker.

--- Applause

MR. SHANKER: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Thank you very much for those words and your warm welcome.

I read some research a couple of weeks ago which I would like to share with you. Somebody did research on audience reactions to speeches, and they found that generally the audience pays very close attention and remembers just about everything during the first 10 minutes of a speech; during the second 10 minutes, their minds start wandering; and starting at



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about 20 minutes, more than half of the people in an audience begin to have sexual fantasies.

--- Laughter

So I would like to assure you that you will enjoy at least part of my speech.

--- Laughter

--- Applause

I would like to begin and spend a few minutes on a few issues that were covered yesterday by a number of speakers, but they are extremely important national issues on which we must answer a very strong campaign or we'll be in serious trouble.

We cannot exaggerate the importance of the budget cuts that are now being made under Graham Rudman. Here we were talking about large increases in state aid, and record increases, and yet if these cuts go through, they will have the effect of wiping out in one year all of the gains that we expect to make in that year at the state level and even more.

I think it's important to stress once again what was pointed out by a few speakers. We should not be calling the members of Congress and demanding that they restore the education cuts, because it is not only the education cuts that will bring us trouble. If New York State, for instance, loses money that it needs for



the elderly, that it needs for the sick, that it needs for providing food, providing housing, providing road repair, providing some assistance to students to continue going to college, the minute those cuts go through, the State will have to rethink its entire budget and all of its priorities to see what comes first, second, third, and fourth, and at that point, improvements in education will take a lower priority than many of these other items.

So what we need to be doing is to pound away at the Congress not just for a restoration of the education money, which is a very important part of the cuts but not the only ones, but essentially to see to it that there aren't any cuts, and that can be done. The Congress -- it's an election year; the entire House is up and control of the Senate is at stake, and that is a good time to bring the pressure.

Of course, the Congress is reading all the signals correctly. They find that the people of the United States, by an overwhelming majority, want a balanced budget and no deficits; and secondly, the people of the United States do not want to cut any benefits or programs; and third, the people of the United States do not want a tax increase. So those are the three things that they have got to work with, and I don't know how you'd quite get around that problem.



The second important issue, of course, is tax reform, and here we have a major fight on our hands. So far, we seem to have won the battle against taxing fringe benefits. You will remember that in the original package, all of the fringe benefits or most of them that we have would have been subject to taxation, and that one, it seems, has been won -- or practically nobody is thinking of reinstating that.

However, the deductibility of state and local taxes is still an issue. It represents, as Gordon Ambach pointed out, \$40 billion, and it means two things: it is both the money, and many of the people in the administration have said that they think that this would be a punishment to those states like New York that tax too much; that essentially this would favour those states that have very low taxes at the state level, because the deductibility means much less to them. So it is a way of the federal government creating an incentive to reduce taxes at the state and local level. Now, you can translate that into reducing support for education, since education is a major part of the budget of each state.

Now, Ambach was absolutely right when he said there can be no compromise on this. They will come in with a whole bunch of compromises, but the purpose of



a compromise is to open up the issue and to say that next year we can compromise a little further, a little further; once this issue is compromised, it will only be a matter of time until the deductibility is completely gone.

Now, this is an issue on which we must educate all of our members and the general public as well. It is an issue of fairness; it does deal with double taxation; there is no reason why you should have to pay a federal tax, not on monies that you are spending to buy a home or a car or an education or food, but money that you are giving another branch of the government. Deductibility has always been there; even when an income tax was imposed during the Civil War to help to pay for the war costs, state and local taxes were deductible at that time; they have been ever since then; and we need to educate our members, because even if we win it during this tax reform fight, it will come right back next year as a way of balancing the budget. As long as the budget is out of balance, they are constantly going to be looking for a sum like \$40 billion that can be picked up to narrow the gap. So this is one that we're going to have to win this year and next year and the year after that and the year after that until it goes away because politicians say, "Well, this issue is just a killer;



they're going to come after us."

5 You should know that we conducted -- the  
AFT and several other unions raised a million dollars at  
the time this was a fight before the House of  
Representatives, and we put on a massive radio and  
television campaign. If you didn't see it, it's because  
10 the member of the House of Representatives from your  
district was already with us. That is, we did not put  
these commercials on in areas where we knew that the  
member of Congress was already with us. We essentially  
15 targetted those Congressmen who were either uncommitted  
or wrong on the issue, and who have a chance of being  
defeated in November -- that is, the people who would be  
most likely to listen. And we put a massive campaign on,  
20 and it's surprising how many minds we changed. We  
changed, I would say, close to 90 per cent of those who  
were going to have some sort of difficulty in getting  
re-elected and who were on the wrong side of this issue.

25 We are going to be doing the same with the  
Senate. We are in the process of collecting another  
million dollars. That's a lot more expensive, because  
it's a lot more expensive to target a whole state with  
television than it is with particular congressional  
30 districts. But we will keep working away at that, and it



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is very important that our members write to our two senators just so that our two senators don't have to be changed on this; but I think it's important that since it may come up again, and it may come up as part of some compromise, it's important that our Senators stand up and show the pile of mail that they have as well as the other Senators.

Now, a third issue that is moving along at the national level is the Education Department's new voucher proposal. This one is much more dangerous than the proposals that have come forth before.

With tuition tax credits, we could use the argument that the tax credit would basically favour rich people who are already sending their kids to private school, and that poor people could not afford to use it, or that their kids would not be taken by these private schools. But now we have a voucher proposal which is based on dismantling Chapter 1 and giving the vouchers only to those children who are in Title 1; that is, to poor children. So that the Reagan Administration is trying to open the door to tuition tax credits and vouchers by saying, "Okay, you guys have argued that this is for the rich. We are not going to give it to the rich. We are now going to give all these poor children the same opportunity to go to private school as wealthy



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children have."

Of course, they have not indicated that the voucher is only going to be about \$550, and therefore is unlikely to pay for tuition at any fancy school, and they have not told parents that the private schools will have the right to pick and choose which students they want, so that it will still be a selective process -- that is, it will select those parents who can afford to add their own money and whose children don't have so many problems that a private school will not want to take them in. But it is harder to fight, and that is a battle that we will have to carry on as well. Fortunately, the Congress is not likely to go for a brand-new spending program at a time of budget deficits, so that one is probably not an immediate danger, but we still have to watch it.

I would like to move now to the reform issues and spend the rest of my time with you on those issues.

It is now three years exactly since "A Nation at Risk" came out, and we have about 30 or 40 reports behind us, and many of you will remember that there was the feeling at the end of that first year of reform that this is something that is going to go away. It's a fad. It's one of these things that the newspapers



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and politicians grab onto, and the American public is not capable of sustained interest for any long period of time, and it comes and it goes.

Well, here we are three years later, and it has not gone yet. The National Governors Association has, I believe, seven task forces working on various educational issues. Almost every state legislature in the country is still working on some type of educational reform, and all the discussion in our own state is about some sort of a super-package in terms of state aid, in terms of teachers' salaries, all because of that feeling that reform is still moving.

The Committee on Economic Development, a major business organization, not only issued a report several months ago, but they have put money in to spend three years with the business community across the country disseminating that report, so this is not just one of those reports that gets written and headlined one day and then disappears. The Chief Executive Officer of Procter & Gamble, who headed the commission that put out that report, is devoting just about full time for the next three years going from city to city, state to state, meeting with chambers of commerce and associated industries and other business groups, asking them to see to it that the recommendations of the report are followed

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through.

Now, I was an advisor to that group and met with them over the more than three years during which they were preparing their report and writing it, and the initial -- one of the initial purposes of writing that report is that these businessmen felt that they could come up with a lot of good ideas for schools, and that it wouldn't cost much money, and at the end of that three years, at the very final meeting before the report was written, I raised the question: I said, "Look. This is a great report and you've got a lot of terrific ideas in here, but do you really think that you can implement these ideas without more money? And a lot more money? Do you really think that cutting costs and savings and doing things more efficiently is all that's needed?"

And I was pleasantly surprised when one businessman after another said, "That's absolutely right. We would just be kidding ourselves and kidding the public. This is going to take a lot of money and we ought to say it and we ought to devote the next years going around to the business community and telling them that adopting a school is nice, but it's not enough; saying nice things about excellence in education is not enough; that the business community has to be there with the governor and the state legislature at the time that

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they are talking about raising taxes and providing money for education, and for the first time we have a report sponsored by this major business group that says exactly that.

There is also a Carnegie task force on which I sit which will be reporting next May 17th, and the report isn't -- the final version is not yet written, but I believe that when that comes out it's going to not only come out with some important recommendations, but it is actually going to take some active steps that will be pretty revolutionary and pretty unique and moving all this ahead.

Now, the bottom line on this is that the reform spirit has not disappeared; it has not gone away; it continues to dominate in state after state. Just two weeks ago, New Mexico adopted a massive piece of education reform, as a part of which every teacher in the state is going to get a salary increase of over \$2000 just from the state package itself, and that is in a state where their revenues dropped by something like \$65 million in one week as a result of the decline in the price of oil. Remember when we used to envy all those states that didn't have to tax people? All they did was tax oil? Well, those states are not in very good shape now: as the price of oil goes down, the tax revenues of

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the state move down.

But even in a state that is in terrible trouble now, that passed and was signed a few weeks ago, and the same is happening all across the country.

Now, there is, however, a reaction to the reforms, even as the reforms are moving ahead; and that is a feeling that sure, we had to pass these pieces of legislation, we had to increase the money, we had to institute examinations, but there is one thing that is wrong with this wave of reform, say most of the people now, and that is that we're trying to reform the schools from the top down. We are trying to do it with laws and with regulations. And if anybody tried to run the businesses of America by passing a lot of laws and telling every business how to operate and what to do, we would call that over-regulation, and we would say it stifles, it prevents people from exercising good judgment and initiative; and yet, what we would call over-regulation in the private sector we call reform here. And it is no good, because the only reforms that are ultimately worthwhile are reforms that give people enough leeway, enough of a sense of judgment so that they can use their intelligence at the local level, and many of these reforms do exactly the opposite.

So there is a second wave that is moving



5 which is going to try to dismantle some of these  
regulations and provide for ways in which teachers in  
their schools can have more freedom and exercise more  
judgment.

10 Now, while all this is happening and is to  
the good, there is one major issue before us which more  
and more policy makers are coming to realize will be the  
dominant issue of the next couple of years, and that is  
that this country faces a massive teacher shortage. At  
15 exactly the time when the country is talking about  
excellence in education, we are about to lose one-half of  
the teachers of this country through a combination of  
retirements and the normal flow of people who move out  
for all the reasons that we're aware of. We are going to  
20 lose 1.1 million teachers in this country in the next  
seven years. That's a lot of teachers, and what are the  
chances of replacing them?

25 Well, the chances are very good if you  
have no standards. Shortages are always relative to  
standards, and if you have no standards, there is never a  
shortage. But what the excellence movement is about is  
that there must be standards, at least these minimum  
30 competency standards of being able to read, write and  
count, and we hope that the standards would be higher  
than that.



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5 And if the standards are indeed going to  
be higher than that, then the question of the teacher  
shortage is a very real one indeed, because we are losing  
1.1 million teachers at a time when groups who  
traditionally came into teaching are no longer coming  
because they have other opportunities. We are losing 1.1  
10 million teachers at a time when college enrolments are  
low because this is the period of the Baby Bust in  
college, and not the period of the Baby Boom, so there  
are fewer students there. As Tom pointed out in his  
15 opening speech, in 1973 when the Baby Boom generation was  
still in there, 25 per cent of all students going to  
college said that they were on their way to becoming  
teachers; now we have a smaller group of students and  
only four and one half per cent of those now in college  
20 say that they want to be teachers. And the worst news of  
that is that the largest number -- by no means all -- but  
the largest number of those who say that they are going  
into teaching are in the bottom quartile of all college  
25 students in the country. In other words, large  
percentages of them are unlikely to pass minimum  
competency examinations.

30 Now, we can see what is happening. I  
don't how many of you followed what happened in Baltimore  
last summer and with the opening of school. Baltimore



5 instituted a new teacher examination so that all prospective teachers were required to take what was really a minimum competency exam. If you flunked it, you really couldn't read, write or count.

10 A substantial number of applicants failed the examination, and they were informed that they had failed it and were told that they would therefore not be hired; however, on the opening day of school, Baltimore just did not have enough teachers who had passed the examination, and so they immediately sent telegrams out to all the teachers who flunked the examination and they hired them. And these teachers are now teaching the students reading, writing and arithmetic, and at the same time they are going to school at night to learn reading, writing and arithmetic at pretty much the same level that they are teaching the students.

15 Now, I wish it were a joke or a phony story, but it isn't. It made headlines all across the country. And by the way, Baltimore is not the only place hiring illiterate teachers. It's the only place that has certified illiterates that I know of.

20 --- Laughter

25 But other places are doing it without all the public relations that goes with that.

30 Now, what happens? What will happen as



district after district does what Baltimore has done? Well, what we're likely to have is teachers' salaries are going up, as you know, nationally. In the last two years on the average they went up 7 per cent a year, which is approximately double the cost of inflation. We still have not gotten back to where we were in purchasing power in '73, but nevertheless people are paying more and more money for teachers' salaries, and at the same time they are about to get for that more money dumber and dumber people coming into the field. And they are going to get very angry. They are going to say, "We passed all these reforms, we put all that money in, we raised ... " -- I mean, some of these governors -- in Texas, they had the first tax increase in a generation to pay for those teachers' salaries. They are passing tax increases all across the country, and they are going to say, "What do we get for our money? Look who's coming in. They can't even read and write and that's what we're spending all of our money on." There's going to be anger. There's going to be bitterness. And in addition to that, there is something else that you are going to get -- we're going to get -- if we keep getting people of lower and lower calibre, and that is, if you hire dumb people, you've got to watch them very carefully. I would.

You know, if you hire somebody smart, you



say, "Well, we'll give you a little bit of a training period in the beginning and then you're on your own. You're smart. You know how to do it." But if you've hired somebody who's not smart, you really have to watch them all the time.

So part of what is going to happen if we bring in large numbers of people of very low calibre is that we're going to have arguments that these people should not get tenure because we were only forced to hire them during a period of shortage, and we should be able to get rid of them later on at such time as we can find better people, so you're going to get arguments for a weakening of tenure protection provisions, and you're also going to drive out good people, because intelligent people do not want to be treated as though they were stupid, and if you get these very oppressive mechanisms of supervision and accountability, the people who do come in who are committed and who are bright aren't going to tolerate it. They're not going to have two sets of evaluation procedures in each school, one for the dummies and one for everybody else. There's going to be one set of procedures for everybody, and the people with talent will not tolerate the kind of procedures that will be imposed on the others, which of course will mean that we will not only be attracting a small percentage of good



people, but we will actually be driving out a substantial number of those good people, thereby reinforcing the downward trend. And as the public pays more and more for dumber and dumber, tuition tax credits and vouchers are going to look better and better, because the public schools are just going to look like they don't deserve the support.

Now, because we're about to hire 1.1 million teachers or half the teachers in the country in the next seven years, what we do in the next seven years is going to determine what our schools look like for the next 20 to 35 years. If we hire terrific people and we're able to get them and able to keep them, the schools are going to look excellent. They are going to be staffed with outstanding people. If we hire people who are at the bottom, we're going to be giving security to a whole bunch of people who will be looked at by the public as people who are incompetent and not capable, and that's going to do something. So it's not just what we are doing next year or the year after or the year after, because we are about to go through a demographic shift -- that is, the people who came in during a certain point in the Baby Boom are all going to leave at about the same time -- what we do during the next few years is really going to have tremendous impact on the amount of public



support that we can have for education throughout the next generation.

Now, what are the traditional answers?

Well, the traditional answers are raise salaries -- not a bad answer; we have to do that. If we don't do it, nothing else is going to work.

Make the job one that has greater intrinsic satisfaction. One of the key issues there is reducing class size. Ted Seizer (phon.) said it very well: instead of going back to various studies showing that class size makes a difference or doesn't make a difference, Seizer essentially said, "What's the purpose of education? It's not to fill out the answers on an idiot multiple choice examination. The purpose of education is to get students to be able to think, to be able to write down their thoughts, to be able to persuade, to express themselves, to be able to think critically, to engage in a good many of these higher-order skills."

Well, how do you develop in a child that ability to think, to argue, to arrange, to express? Well, you get him to write it down, and then when he writes it down, you mark it. You don't just put "A", "B", "C", or "D". You start raising questions, like "Is this is the best way to open it? Is it interesting? Why



do you put this sentence here? Would this paragraph have been better there? Did you leave something out here?"

You have to rethink what was done, and you sit down with that student for a few minutes and raise these questions and give the student an idea of how it might be done better. Have the student write it again. And then you read it again and go through that same process. And you do it over and over again, the same way as if you were coaching somebody for an athletic event that just takes a lot of practice and going over it and doing better until you develop the ability to start seeing some of those things for yourselves.

Well, Seizer says, "How many teachers can really do that?" Not "Can they do it?" Of course they can. But "Will they do it?" If they have 30 students in a class and five classes a day, that's 150 students. If it takes five minutes to mark a paper and it takes five minutes with each student to coach the student and ask him the right questions to get him to make those changes, that 10 minutes per student for 150 students is about 25 hours. So each set of papers takes about 25 hours of work. How many teachers are going to do that?

You can't, because you can't afford the time. And yet if you don't do it, you know that you're not doing the job. You're not really helping the



5 students. And so the teacher is caught in an impossible position of either not doing the job right and feeling miserable about it, or doing the job right and spending practically every hour on the job with very little other time. So class size is an important issue.

10 There is another important issue that's facing us, and that is that no matter what we do about salaries and class size, within reason, there are certain areas of shortage where we're just not going to get an adequate number of people.

15 Take mathematics and science. Until the reform movement came through, large numbers of students took no math and science in high school because they didn't have to, or they took alternative courses that didn't have very much substance to them. Well, you don't  
20 create mathematicians by passing a law. You've got to have them from high school, and those in high school need to have taken a pretty solid algebra course in junior high school, and those had to have a pretty solid  
25 foundation in arithmetic and problem-solving before that. So the next generation of mathematicians is really starting now in the First, Second, Third and Fourth Grade, and we are going to have to wait for them with a  
30 tougher curriculum to go to junior high school, high school, go to college -- it's going to be a long time



before we get a decent supply of mathematicians and scientists.

What do we do about that? How do we solve the problem?

Whatever we pay the small number of mathematicians and scientists, IBM will pay them more. We're not in a world where we make a move, we do something, and then that's fine, it solves the problem. If we make a move, others make moves to counter what we're doing, because there's just a certain number of those people, and we need them and they need them. It's a major issue what the schools do during this next period.

There is still another issue in terms of how we attract and retain teachers, which is very central, and that is an analysis of what is it that students who are now in college want. What do they expect from a job?

Well, some time ago, I know when I started teaching, most people who went to work, mainly they expected a certain amount of salary and security for the job, and they expected that most jobs would be unpleasant, and they took them because that's the way life was. You either worked in a factory or you worked as a salesperson or you worked as a teacher or you worked as a letter carrier, and most people viewed it as a kind



of tradeoff. That's what you do in order to make a living.

Well, today if you go out and ask most people who work for a living, "Why are you working?", they do not answer, "Because I've got to eat." Of course, they wouldn't work if they weren't getting paid, because they do have to eat, but that's not the first thing that comes to their minds. Seven out of every ten people, when asked why they work, say, "Because I enjoy the job, because I am able to use certain abilities that I have. They respect me, and do you know how I know? They give me a lot of -- they allow me to do things my own way. They don't tell me exactly how to do it. And because I am able to do things my way, I do it better, and I get recognized for it, and I enjoy what I am doing."

People want jobs that are relatively unsupervised. They want jobs where they are respected and where they can exercise judgment. And teaching, unfortunately, is one of the factory-like types of jobs where all the orders keep coming down from above and where there is still fairly close supervision. And teaching doesn't look like the kind of a job that would be attractive to a well-educated person. So major changes have to be made there.

And there is just one other point that I



would like to mention about the problems that we have in attracting and keeping teachers, and that is that there are very few adults around who want to be locked in a room with 30 kids for their entire lives.

--- Applause

In the literature, that's called "Teacher Isolation". And most people want to work in a job where they have a good, strong relationship with other adults. And they want other adults to be able to see what they do, and they want to see what the others do, and they want to share, they want some sort of set of adult relationships, and they do not want to rely solely on a set of relationships with children, and that is a problem, too.

Now, if we can't somehow make teaching attractive enough to get a good share of outstanding people, tax credits and vouchers are going to become more and more attractive. Now, can we solve these problems?

They will be very difficult to solve on a traditional basis.

Let's take the salary issue. In order to make a difference, the salaries have to be substantially changed -- not just marginally. For instance, a \$1000 increase to every teacher in the country would be nice. We would take it tomorrow. But it wouldn't do very much



5 to change the incentive structure. There would not be many more people out there saying, "Ah. Now all teachers got \$1000. Now I've decided to become a teacher." There may be a few, but not very, very many.

10 You've got to do something that is very significant. For instance, you'd probably have to move teachers' salaries up by about 50 per cent. That would be noticed.

--- Applause

15 I'm talking about really attracting people of -- and moving out of that bottom quartile that now is attracted to teaching because they feel they have no other place to go and they are going to be accepted here because the attractions are not very great.

20 A 50 per cent increase, by the way, would merely put us in about the same salary position that, let us say, accountants and other people who have about the same amount of college background as we do -- it would not put us in with engineers or mathematicians or doctors  
25 or lawyers or a bunch of others. It would move us to sort of a middle rung of salaries among college-educated people.

30 Now, a 50 per cent increase in salary would cost, with pension costs and social security, it would cost about \$30 billion nationally. And the whole



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5 -- all of Chapter 1 is \$3 billion. So we are talking  
about a sum of money which is massive, and it's unlikely  
to happen, either at once or even slowly. If one were to  
take a look at salaries, if one were to view it  
archaeologically -- that is, you know, if you had a chart  
10 saying up here are nuclear physicists and surgeons and  
certain businessmen, and you have the lines across, and  
you look at each profession and each occupation, and if  
you look at it every ten years or every 20 years or every  
30 years you see that very rarely do groups within  
15 society jump in that archaeological structure. That is,  
groups maintain their same relative position. And the  
only groups that jump are groups that make certain  
radical changes in the structure of their occupation.  
20 That is, at one time doctors were very low-paid, very  
unprofessional, they graduated schools that were  
part-time schools or summer schools; and when that  
changed as a result of the Flexner (phon.) Report over a  
period of time, they really jumped. The same was true  
25 with law. The same was true of business school. So the  
salary issue, while it would work wonders, it is unlikely  
that this nation or the 50 states separately are going to  
in any reasonable period of time make that sort of a  
30 difference.

The second thing: What about class size

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5 reduction? Well, that too is very expensive. But  
remember, here we are having a terrible time hiring 1.1  
million teachers, and every time you reduce class size,  
10 then it means you have to hire not 1.1 million, but 1.2,  
1.3, 1.4 million teachers, because now, in addition to  
replacing the teachers who are leaving, you have to hire  
the teachers to reduce class size. And since we are  
digging the bottom of the barrel, the more teachers we  
15 hire the lower in the barrel we have to dig to get those  
teachers. So we have a kind of a vicious circle here,  
that you can't get people in because the job isn't  
satisfying, but if you get more people in to make the job  
satisfying, at least initially the people that you are  
likely to get are people that you don't want.

20 Well, when you hit up against problems  
like that, where the salary issue becomes huge, the class  
size issue becomes huge, the question of how we're going  
to turn teaching into a job that is not an old-time  
25 factory-model job, but one which earns respect, the whole  
series of those issues, and at a time when if we don't  
solve these issues the consequences are quite bad -- that  
is, the public is still at about the 50/50 point in terms  
of "Do you favour tuition tax credits and do you favour  
30 vouchers?", they are divided; they are right in the  
middle. The public and the polls -- the polls have gone



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up a little bit, and the public sort of says, "As a result of these reforms we think schools are getting a little bit better. We are going to give the schools another chance." But if that chance turns out to fail in the sense that things get worse after all this effort instead of getting better, people will turn in that other direction.

Now, what is needed is to start rethinking everything that we do in school. And I think of it on the line of what is happening in the automobile industry, which is suffering the same sort of dangers. We all remember that in the last few years we started wondering whether the United States would have an automobile industry at all. They tried all sorts of surface reforms; they tried everything; and they are still in very deep trouble.

But there are a few things that are happening that are very exciting and very interesting, and there is no reason why we in public education shouldn't be doing something that's similar.

The Saturn Project is an outstanding example of what they're trying to do. In the Saturn Project, they have essentially decided we are not just going to continue making automobiles the way we always have; we are going to start as though we had never built



5 an automobile before, so that we don't repeat the same mistakes. We are going to start by involving every single worker in every aspect of how we build the plant, of the design of the car, of the type of machinery, of everything else. And we are going to end up with something that we hope is going to be the best car produced anywhere in the world as a result of starting from scratch and not merely trying to improve something that exists.

15 Well, we don't know if it's going to work yet, but the idea is certainly an exciting one. And a few months ago I felt that it's a good idea to apply it to education, too, and I thought of a story that Checker Finn, who spoke here last year -- Checker Finn raised a very interesting question. He said, "New York City spends \$5000 on each child, \$5000 on each child, for operating budget." This is not building construction. Operating budget. In New York City, a class of 30 is not considered a large class. There are class sizes above that.

25 So let's take a class of 30 students, and \$5000 is spent on each student. That's \$150,000 devoted to each classroom in the operating budget.

30 Now, let's say that the teacher is on maximum and let's say the teacher is in Tier 1, and with



5 welfare fund benefits and health benefits and everything  
else, let's say that -- let's be really wild and say that  
they are spending -- the City is spending \$60,000 on that  
teacher on salaries and fringes - or \$65,000.

10 Well, where is the rest of the money  
going? There's another 60,000 left somewhere. I am sure  
the teachers in New York City feel that they are getting  
\$60,000 worth of support for each classroom out there  
somewhere ---

--- Laughter

15 --- administrative support, marvellous  
textbooks that are new each year or two, supplies -- but  
you know, none of that support is visible. There are  
shortages. There are all the usual toilet paper  
20 problems, missing, et cetera. Well, wouldn't it be a  
good idea if somebody stopped for a moment and said,  
"Look, suppose we gave each teacher \$150,000 and said,  
'Now, you rebuild this school.'"? Give all the teachers  
25 in the school collectively all the money that's spent  
there and ask them to start from scratch, and not to  
spend a nickel of that money until they figure out what  
will be good for the students and for the teachers of  
that school. I bet we'd get some schools that are run  
30 very, very differently from the way they are today if we  
had to start from the very beginning figuring out how to



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spend that money.

5 --- Applause

10 Now, the most promising, the most promising reform report came out a few months ago from the California Commission on the Teaching Profession. If you haven't read it, I urge you to get it and I urge you to have discussions on it with members in your schools and in your school district and with your leadership.

15 Essentially, it says that the only way we are going to turn this thing around in terms of getting an adequate number of teachers who are competent is to stop treating teachers as though they were ignorant and as though they were children, as though they were mere hired hands ---

20 --- Applause

25 --- and to turn -- it says, "Do for teachers what you've done for doctors, lawyers, dentists, and every other profession. Turn the whole professional governance over to the teachers themselves."

--- Applause

30 And then it will be the teachers, through a state-wide -- through a series of state-wide professional boards that they themselves establish -- there will be teachers who make the decisions as to what tests should be given to teachers, what should be the



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structure of a school, everything from curriculum materials, everything that you could think of.

Now, there are a number of ideas which that report contains that I want to throw out, and these aren't mandates; these are ideas that would be considered by teachers after they were in control. They might accept some of them. They might. They would undoubtedly accept some of them, reject some of them, but here are some of them, and some of these are also some of the ideas that we have been discussing; even though many of them are not policy of NYSUT or of the AFT, they have been discussed at press conferences, they are being discussed by a Commission on the Future of Education, and at the AFT they are discussed at our Executive Council meetings, and I would like to share some of them with you, which you have seen some headlines about.

One is the idea that teachers themselves ought to create a category called "Board Certified Teacher". All doctors are able to practise medicine, but years ago the medical profession itself decided that it would certify that certain doctors were outstanding in certain areas. It doesn't prevent the general practitioner from doing all those things that he wants to, and it doesn't prevent you from going to a general practitioner to get any service that you want. But if



5 you are knowledgeable, you will know that the profession  
itself says that certain people have these specialties,  
and there are national boards of different -- of surgery,  
and anaesthesia, and -- I don't know; 30 or some areas --  
10 where they say, "These people have received special  
training and have taken special examinations, both  
written and practical and observation, and these people  
we certify as being outstanding."

15 Now, why not have teachers create such  
boards? You'd have them in each subject, and you'd have  
them for elementary schools and you'd have them for  
special education. This would not be done by the State  
of New York; it would not be done by the United States  
20 Government; it would be done by outstanding teachers who  
would, in a sense, be saying that the following people,  
in addition to being able to teach, have gone through a  
procedure which shows that they understand how to  
25 evaluate textbooks. They know how to train new people in  
the field. They know a whole series of things in their  
field. They know a lot of the research that has been  
done as to things that work and don't. They know the  
availability of materials and models. And that these  
30 teachers would be able to negotiate, through their union,  
for a higher salary and for different responsibilities  
within the school.



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5 Now, the purpose of that, obviously, is severalfold. One is that teachers should not be relinquishing a lot of their professional authority to people who are administrators and supervisors. They should keep a good deal of their professional authority themselves.

10 Secondly, if a fairly substantial number of teachers over time can become Board Certified, teaching would become an attractive profession because somebody would say, "Look, this is what I'm going to get -- at least that. But if I am ambitious and work hard, I can become Board Certified and I can earn a lot more."

15 Why not give it to all teachers? Because of the amount of money involved, as I indicated a few minutes ago. I think very frequently of what would have happened at the turn of the century if the doctors of this country had taken the position that everybody who works in a hospital with patients had to be an M.D. -- that is, there could be no nurses, there could be no X-ray technicians, there could be no pharmacists, there could be nobody except for the secretaries who sign people in and out, that everybody in the hospital would have to be a doctor.

25  
30 Well, I can tell you what the consequences of that would have been. You would have five million



doctors in the country today, and each one of them would have a salary of \$20,000 a year, because when you have five million people in a field, you can't afford to give each one of them \$150,000 a year. The country is not going to put that amount of money into it.

So that essentially, this is not only a strategy for recognizing outstanding people, but it is a strategy for keeping outstanding people in the field and a strategy for providing greater peer relationships in terms of involvement within schools. That's under discussion. I will in a little while get to one of the questions that is raised about this frequently, one of the things that goes with it, and that is peer review issues.

These are career teachers, who spend a lifetime in teaching.

Now, the second suggestion that is thrown out is one that I have been talking about for a while also, and that is if there aren't enough mathematicians and enough scientists to staff both our schools and IBM, we need to keep mathematicians and scientists, to bring them into schools; if we can't have them for 25 or 35 years, we at least ought to get them for five years.

That is not what I would like to see. I would like to see teachers as career teachers and spend a



lifetime. But it is better to have a person who knows math for five years than it is to have somebody who is not familiar with the subject for 30 years teaching that subject. Now, that seems rather clear but there may be some arguments about it.

Now, how do you get people like that? That's where the Talented Teacher Act came in, both at the national and at the state level, the idea that especially in areas of shortage, you take bright kids going out of college and you say, "If you will teach for five years, we will pay off all your college loans and we will give you, in addition to paying your salary, pay for your graduate professional education in some other field."

*A number of colleges and universities are* now doing something else to get teachers in areas of shortage, and that is there are quite a few people who retire early in other fields. They retire at age 50 or 55. And they are recruiting them to take a Master's degree in education and to teach from the age of 55 to 65, or 55 to 70. Many of these people always wanted to be teachers but they couldn't afford to be.

--- Laughter

Well, remember what the alternative is. There are just not enough people in college total. If we get the talented people we're going to be in fierce



5 competition with other major institutions. If we get  
untalented people, we're going to be telling the public  
that the public schools aren't any good and that they  
ought to be looking for alternatives. So that's the  
problem. Otherwise, none of these proposals would be  
10 thrown out there.

15 Now, another proposal that the California  
report makes is that there ought to be a professional  
report on each school each year; that is, how many people  
quit this year? Quit teaching? And why? Parents and  
the community ought to be informed. How many classes are  
oversized? There ought to be a report on that. There  
ought to be an overall report like what Consumers' Union  
does on a product. I mean, we have had this whole  
20 business in recent years of talking about teacher  
accountability, that everybody should be evaluating and  
supervising teachers. Well, what about evaluating the  
functioning of an entire school? What about a school  
where a third of the teachers leave because they can't  
25 stand the oppressive supervision in the school? What  
about a school that has a huge class size? What about a  
school that has a 50 or 60 per cent turnover in the  
student body so that the teachers can't do anything with  
30 the students because they only see them for a few months  
before they go? It's just a revolving door of students.



So the notion of a report card on schools is part of that.

The California report proposes something else. It proposes running schools on a four-quarter year-round basis. And the reason for that in California is that they are experiencing a huge immigration and baby boom, so that if they do not use their buildings more efficiently on a full-year basis, they are going to have to spend their money not on teachers' salaries, but they are going to have to build thousands of brand-new school buildings, and the question in that state is, "Do you spend all the money on a new construction program, or do you spend it on getting and retaining good teachers?" And they raised the question of using technology more, not to replace teachers, but using videotapes and videocassettes and computers more for instruction in order to give teachers more time to do the marking of papers and the coaching of students and the critical thinking and those functions that the teacher can do best.

Now, I would like to talk about two issues that are probably the least acceptable to teachers today, and that are part of the discussions all across the country on these professional issues, and to devote a few minutes to each one.

The first one is the concept of peer review. It exists in a few places. Toledo has now had



5 it for four or five years. I notice that the Rochester Teachers Association has just negotiated a proposal which is a variation of that and which will go into effect soon, which has just, I understand, been overwhelmingly ratified by a Representative Assembly within that district. Cincinnati has it; Hartford is getting it; a number of other places.

10 One of the reasons that teachers generally say, "I don't want to be involved in peer review. That's not my job. It's the principal's job," is that the picture that most teachers have in their mind of peer review is that a lot of teachers would go around spying on their colleagues and would be sort of a vigilante system where you go around looking for incompetence all over the place, and delivering them to somebody for execution -- or at least for trial. That is not the way it works, and it's not the concept.

20 The idea of it is this. It is used in two cases. First, a brand new teacher comes in or a group of brand new teachers come in in September. The idea is that they should have an adequate internship program of three years, and that they should get their training not from the principal or the assistant principal, but they should get their training and their internship from outstanding teachers in a school who are given some time



to do that over that three-year period, and that after that three years ---

--- Applause

--- after that three years, during which time outstanding teachers have given them all the help that they can give them, that it is those very outstanding teachers who have tried to help them and who have been with them so much of the time who effectively make the decision as to whether these people should remain in teaching or whether it's pretty hopeless.

Now, remember that this is not the old-fashioned sink-or-swim method. This is not somebody thrown into a classroom, and through no fault of his or her own after three years doesn't know what to do.

These new teachers are now teachers who have received three years of the best help that anybody can get, and if a teacher at the end of that three years still shows that they can't make it, I think we would not only be doing the school system a great favour to tell that person to look for another job, we'd be doing that individual a great favour. Imagine if you're not good at it, spending the next 30 years at something that you just can't handle. So that is the first instance.

Now, the idea in Toledo is that teachers should be treated like any other profession, and that is,



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5 it should be hard to get in, but once you get in you  
should be left alone and you should be trusted because  
you have made it in and people do not look at doctors and  
lawyers and dentists every year, and they don't give them  
evaluation reports. They leave them alone. Basically,  
10 as soon as you've gotten through your probationary period  
you should not be evaluated any more unless there is  
evidence that somehow you have fallen apart; and that  
will apply to a very small number of people who later on  
-- maybe they have psychological problems, alcoholism,  
15 other things later on that happen -- and in those cases a  
similar team of peers tries to give assistance to the  
person, does everything that they can to see to it that  
the person is restored, but if they are unable to, that  
they would essentially say that we've done everything  
20 that we can to help this person and we're sorry to say  
that we cannot certify to you that this person is able to  
function as a teacher.

25 Now, I can't think of anything -- I can't  
think of any single action that teachers could take that  
would more convince the public that teachers care about  
quality, that they should have the power to make  
decisions, because they take responsibility for quality,  
30 that they should earn more money because it is a  
different type of profession, and I also can't think of a



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5 set of procedures that would more protect teachers who  
are innocent; that is, none of these teachers are going  
to be gunning for some teacher because that teacher is  
active in the organization or that teacher took a  
grievance or that teacher raised the wrong question at a  
10 faculty conference. The only things that those peer  
committees will be looking at will be just one thing:  
how the person functions in the classroom. And  
everything else will be irrelevant.

15 Now, it is being tried in a number of  
places and I think it's -- I think it would be very bad  
if everybody tried it at once. I think it's important  
for some groups, some locals, to start trying it in a  
limited area, and to share with us what is good about the  
20 system and what is bad about it. So far the only one  
that has been around for four or five years is Toledo.  
That one is good. It ought to be tried in a few other  
places, and if it works it ought to be extended more. If  
it doesn't work, then we will have the reason why. We'll  
25 be able to say we tried it in 15 or 20 or 30 places, and  
we gave it everything we had, and still it did not work.

30 A second issue that ought to be thought  
about and that's very controversial, and it also is not  
policy, is the notion of setting salaries according to  
market conditions.



Now, we have always in the past taken the view that all teachers should be paid on the basis of the same schedules, and we had very good reasons for doing it. We should still very strongly oppose any notion that a math teacher should get more money because math is a more important subject than, let's say, English or social studies or art or music. That would be a very, very horrible thing.

But what if in one year there is a shortage of math teachers and in another year there is a shortage of English teachers and in the third year there is a shortage of music teachers? What if there are shortages in different areas and we had some system which said that no matter what the shortage, that we want to make sure that teachers who are competent and qualified come in to teach?

Now, remember what our current system is. The current system is that if you can't find enough money to get a teacher of X subject, then you hire a teacher who is not competent in that subject to teach it. That's what we do now. That's a very, very hard position to take. It's also a very hard position to take that if you have a shortage of English teachers you have to raise the salary of every social studies teacher or vice-versa. Nobody else anywhere else will understand that.



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Now, are there ways in which we can create market mechanisms that we can control? Not ones that will be used by management to keep some low and others high, but some which will essentially elevate all teachers' salaries over a period of time, because people will tend to go into fields of shortage and therefore dry up those fields that are in surplus. Something that ought to be looked at. The consequences, at any rate, are something that we ought to keep in mind, that if we don't do something like that, we may have 15 or 20 years of time when the public schools are not adequately teaching certain subjects, and even though it is not our fault, the answer that, "Well, you didn't raise the salaries of 2.2 million teachers in order to get teachers in these shortage areas," is not going to sit very well with anybody, and ultimately we will be blamed for that lack of quality.

Well, I am not here to sell specific proposals. I am here to urge that we open up all these questions to discussion, and that I think that perhaps what we could do is turn to one suggestion that was made by Governor Cuomo, and maybe turn it around a little bit.

The Governor has called for "Schools of Excellence", and by schools of excellence he means that you take all the students who are achieving very well in

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a certain area and you put them all into one school. Well, you know, that's like a hospital of excellence. You take all the people who have no diseases and you put them in a hospital. That hospital will have the best track record in the country.

--- Applause

But to me a school of excellence is a school that has all the kids and problems that you normally have, but does better because of the way it is running things and the way it is doing things. And so perhaps to go back to the proposal that I made before, that either in addition to or as a substitute for Governor Cuomo's schools of excellence, what we ought to do is take a certain number of schools that our locals would run as our own model schools; that is, where teachers would redesign these entire schools in terms of policies and programs that we feel would be more effective, to try out some of the ideas that are being discussed nationally and some of the ideas that would emerge as teachers begin to feel that they have the power to come up with new ideas and to have them implemented.

Well, as Tom has told you, today and tomorrow will be my last days as a member of your Board of Directors and Executive Committee. It has been a really great period since the time that this organization



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merged. I have very many wonderful memories. I'm not leaving your membership. I'm now a retired New York City teacher, ---

--- Applause

--- a member of the Retired Chapter, and what we've done over this period of time is half of what we set out to accomplish. We set out to be the most powerful teacher organization in the country, and we in this day have become that. There's no question about it. But the word "Power" really has two senses.

There is a kind of power that comes from numbers and from money and from political involvement. We have that. We've got all the teachers of the state, we have an excellent political operation, legislative operation, and a tremendous amount of participation. I am not for a moment suggesting that we change that or give that up.

But there is a second kind of power, and that power comes from giving leadership and new ideas. There are a lot of people out there who are hungering for what do we do to solve these problems in education? How do we get good teachers to come and stay? How do we change the school and the classroom so that what is going on now that isn't so good is better and is different and is changed?



5 But legislators and businessmen really do not believe that they can run the schools. They don't think that they know our business any more than they would feel that we know how to run their business. When they come together and say do this or do that or do something else, frequently it is just because they are not hearing any ideas from anybody else.

10 And what needs to be done is that this organization which is so powerful now needs to use that power more in another dimension, and to come up with some exciting ideas and some new ideas, and maybe some ideas which have some risk.

15 Now, we should not do it in all schools at once. We shouldn't go forward and say, "Make the following changes," any more than General Motors is shutting down all their other auto plants while they are building Saturn. They don't know if Saturn's going to work yet; they're going to try to make something that's a hell of a lot different and a hell of a lot better.

20 Meanwhile, they are not destroying everything that they have going. And I think that we ought to do the same.

25 People are looking to us for ideas, and we ought to find the teachers who have them and who are willing to work them out and willing to enter into a new type of power relationship, and that is the power of not

30



5 just being able to prevent things from happening, or the  
power to push something through once in a while, but a  
different type of power, and that is the power of having  
all the citizens and business leaders and legislative  
10 leaders of this state look to us and say "Well, if you  
want to know what to do in education, don't ram it down  
anybody's throat by putting it in legislation. Don't  
have a school board put it through. The best ideas come  
from the people who are delivering that education, and  
that is the teachers. Give them the power to make  
15 decisions; trust them to do it; and they will."

Now, if we can create that sort of model,  
that sort of a feeling on the part of the people of this  
state, I am sure that we will get a lot of terrific  
20 people coming into teaching, because then teaching will  
not just be being locked in a classroom for 30 years with  
a bunch of kids; teaching will also consist of  
restructuring and redesigning schools. It will consist  
25 of working with one's peers on the development of  
materials, on the evaluation of textbooks, of training  
new teachers, of relationships with colleges and  
universities and teacher training. And I go back to the  
point that I made before: The teachers that we hire in  
30 the next seven or eight years are going to be with us  
probably for the next 25 or 30. If we get good ones, we



are going to be well on the way to defeating tax credits and vouchers. If we get bad ones, it may very well be that all the power that we can exercise in the legislative arena won't be enough to stop an angry public from getting even with public schools after they feel so disappointed.

So I would like to thank you for all these wonderful years with NYSUT.

I would like to thank Tom for his outstanding leadership. We've had a great relationship.

And the other officers and the members of the Board and the Executive Committee.

And I look forward to being with you at these R.A.'s in the years to come. Thank you very much.

--- Standing Ovation

MR. HOBART: Thank you very much, Al.

You know, whenever anybody talks about NYSUT, they'll always talk about Al Shanker. Whenever Al looks at his great accomplishments, he's going to think about NYSUT.

And I know he has worn with pride over the years the different kinds of pins that we have had. From the time that we had a state of New York that simply had black letters saying "NYSUT" to the time we had the round pin, and even the pin that we had which recognized those