



British Columbia Teachers' Federation

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DRAFT

SHANKER PANEL

BCP&VPA COUNTDOWN '88

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Tapes will be available of President Shanker's Keynote by noon today. We are also taping this panel session and we would hope by 3:00--3:30 this afternoon we will have tapes of this available.

The next section of this morning's program is an attempt on our part to analyze teacher unions from a variety of perspectives within the educational community in our province. Our panel, as I mentioned before the break, is composed of a principal, a superintendent, a school trustee, and a representative from our teacher union. We expect they will ask questions that you are already wondering about. I'm sure your mind was racing and churning as fast as mine was as President Shanker was speaking. We also expected there will be some significant differences in perspective. One thing that will be the same, I'm sure, from all our panelists, is our continuing commitment to education. So, we expect a little controversy, but we expect that singularity of commitment also. Our panel, on my left and starting next to President Shanker, is George Buckley, he is principal of Terry Fox Senior Secondary School in Port Coquitlam, currently president of the British Columbia Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association. Next to George, Bob Buzza, currently Executive Director of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, a position he has held since 1973. Next to Bob is Owen Corcoran. Owen is superintendent of School District #55, Burns Lake, and is currently president of the Association of British Columbia School Superintendents. And, on the end of the table, we have Charles Hingston. Charles has been a school trustee in School District #64, the Gulf Islands. He has been a trustee there since 1981, he was Board Chairman from 1983-1985, and he is currently in his second year term as president of the British Columbia School Trustees Association. We will start this part of the session by asking each of our panelists to say just a few words. We are identifying them as representatives of constituencies. George...

(George) Thank you very much Dallas. I was surprised, or noted with interest, Mr. Shanker's closing statement. Moving teachers into new relationships is the most exciting thing I've ever done. I recall back in the 60s going to the Agrodome in Vancouver for a talk, a speech, a rabble-rouser if you will, delivered by Albert Shanker, and I can tell you, I thought at that time he was excited. I can appreciate how he feels now, because I think we all feel that same type of excitement. To see the changes that we have gone through in British Columbia over the last 18 months--the natures of our associations and organizations have changed significantly and are changing. British Columbia Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association has established itself as a professional association. The British Columbia Teachers'

Federation has established itself as a union of teachers. Over the last eighteen months, we have talked around our board table and in our membership, about staking out the territory, about building good relationships, about looking after kids and the quality of education. What Mr. Shanker said this morning, convinced me that our focus should be on building relationships and not on staking out territories. I wonder whether or not we have to go through the experience of 20 years of New York state and the United States of America to get from where we are now to where we should be, if we recognize that here in British Columbia the teachers' union has just become established (that was circa 1960 I believe in New York). Do we have to go through that 20 years in order to get to where I think we can all agree we should be? I think there is one significant advantage that we have here in British Columbia, and that is in the boards, in the provincial associations, in local districts, relationships have been important for a number of years. Discussions on contracts, discussions on class sizes, discussions on a number of things have, in fact, been discussions. And I think, at least I would hope, that our relationships that exist at the moment might be a little bit better than they were in the 1960's. If that's the case, maybe there is light at the end of the tunnel, maybe we can get from A to C without going through B.

Thank you, George. Bob...

(Bob) People, everyone here is aware of the transformation that has taken place within the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. I think a number underestimate its significance. Having all 75 local associations pass by 75 per cent majorities changes to their constitutions, and then the Special General Meeting making changes to the provincial constitution to bind people together voluntarily, having some 99 per cent, for a variety of reasons, sign up, having an organization lose a good percentage of its members into management ranks on a compulsory basis, having another organization as part of an obligatory responsibility with the power, in fact, to do much in fact, of what the federation stands for, all of those things, have transformed the organization profoundly. It is now a true federation.

The power in those local associations in terms of the future of the organization, cannot be underestimated. It will have to be more responsive than it ever has been, since 1919, to the needs and aspirations of that group at the local level to be successful. As George was just mentioning, we are laggards in the sense that we are just entering into full collective bargaining in this province, laggards across the country, laggards in terms of other working groups.

My question, too, would be how can we short-circuit the process? And I suggest, in all seriousness, that if we look at the fundamentals within the British Columbia Teachers' Federation as found in its member's guide, which most of you are very familiar with, take a look at the philosophy there, the policies there, we will find ample evidence that the type of thing that Al Shanker talked about this morning, is what that organization has stood for for decades.

So, the key question is not whether or not there is that much need to change the orientation or philosophy of the teachers of the province who consider themselves professional, and even more so now that they are a union of professionals, but how to get people on the so-called management side to grow

up and realize that if we don't capitalize on that reality and recognize that professionalism, then the type of thing that is necessary in fact to transform our schools isn't going to happen, or it's going to happen in such a way that the divisions will be obvious, and the drain to the alternative systems which exist in British Columbia will accentuate. I look forward to the discussion.

Owen...

(Owen) Albert, I need you to know that once I knew that after 25 minutes of active listening I could go into the sexual fantasy mode, I had much better feelings about being on this panel. If I blush at any time, you will realize that I am reliving one of those moments! Seriously, I should say that, first of all, in the course of the conversation we will accept Mr. Buzza's challenge to grow up. Dallas, to get started, I would like to return to one of your statements which was, what does the new order mean to the constituents. And I'll speak personally as a superintendent. The concern that I have is that so many of the essential energies which we all bring to these situations will be expended in minimizing the sort of "win/lose" scorecard that the initial bargaining and the attendant posturing and the restructuring of what has been an arena of accepted relationships will bring. For me, I see a two-fold pressure. First of all, I have a group of teacher administrators who have been cut off from what I call the "Sanctuary of the Herd," and who, in that isolation, feel frequently that the whole world is beating up on them. And the dance step here is that I have to hold them at arm's length while still dancing cheek-to-cheek and promising them that it will be good and that I will respect them in the morning. And I have another pressure, which comes from the regular day-long adversarial sessions with a group of teacher negotiators which for the first time does not contain any principal, and this group is suddenly convinced that they can win it all in the first bout--instead of realizing that before they compete for the gold medal, they must go through a series of preliminaries. And the dance step here is to jab and run, to clinch and rest, and then try to drink as much water and suck in as much oxygen as I can between rounds, and hope that I will make it to the final bout and get a chance to compete for the gold medal. But the dilemma that I see, and it's one that has been voiced by the two previous speakers, is that how do we balance the organizational struggles in which we are presently engaged as adversaries against the co-operative and the collaborative unity which we must embrace if we are to make our schools such places as are organized in the way that people work and the way that people learn. I agree that schools should not be places of symbolic activities, detached from meaningful experiences, but the diversity that we will probably generate out of this round of bargaining is such that we may not get back to that real and pressing question for four or five years. And that's a dilemma.

Charles...

(Charles) Thank you very much, Dallas. Welcome president, brother, Albert, Mr., I'm not quite sure which one you'd like to be called but I, at this point in time, am probably one of your few official brothers out here. I don't like that term, so I'll call you Albert if I may. I much appreciate your being here, I think it was Dallas's remarks--what did Dallas say, perfect--I think that that would have been a one-word summary of what you had to say for many people here. It certainly got different things going

for me. I'd like to say a couple of things if I may about the other panel members here. I do, in fact, have a suit, that's the first thing I want to let you know. And, not only do I have a suit, but I have shoes that are not runners and I have a couple of ties, too, but I was told--and Dallas is to blame here--that this was going to be a small, informal gathering at Harrison Hot Springs, and I had this kind of vision of the hot pool, and us and Albert sitting around solving the problems of the world. So I didn't, in fact, bring my suit and I--moving straight along, the connection is not obvious to anybody--but to sexual fantasies, I was going to talk about those as well. I tried to have some when Albert was talking but I did fail, but I may not fail being seated this way around, and I'll do my best. The four people sitting at this table here, and I'd very quickly like to talk about all four of them including myself. George Buckley, your new president--the president of most of you--started phoning me fairly frequently as soon as he became president. Some people, it annoys me when they phone me, but I was really pleased to see George had hit straight into the mode that I think we've got into in education in British Columbia today--I hope we've got into--of the constituent groups talking to each other. And I think, again, that Albert talked about this, and I think we're beginning to see it in British Columbia, and I hope we are not back in 1960--I hope that we can do something original in 1988 here. But, George did that, and I thank him for it, and I hope he continues to do it whether he gets my answering machine or my three kids or whatever, I hope he continues to try because I think that that's the level of communication that we need to share among ourselves. Bob Buzza--when I became a director of the BCSTA, I know in some of your programs it says that I am a BCTF member, I want to announce now that I have never been a teacher and that I probably never could be because I don't think that I have the patience or the ability, but, Bob Buzza and I didn't meet in my first year as a director of the BCSTA I don't think because meetings went on about three years ago, for some strange reason. I have met frequently with Mr. Buzza, with Elsie McMurphy, and table officers--comparatively frequently--since that time and again, I think that that is healthy, especially considering what we've been through in British Columbia. Owen, and the superintendents, and Bob Buzza, and the secretary-treasurers, we've all been having these meetings. Some people say, Charles, why do the four of you presidents--we call them presidents' meetings, it's rather nice, the "presidents' meetings"--we kind of sit around, George has been told about these and he's thinking about joining us, I don't know if he thinks he can enjoy it enough. I think it's really helpful. I think that the dialogue at that level, not with hundreds of people around, but just the four of you sharing information and hopefully giving that information back to your constituent groups, is what is going to hold us in good stead in this first round of collective bargaining. About myself, my "brother" comment wasn't completely facetious. I am, in fact, a union member. I'm a member of the B.C. Ferry and Marine Workers' Union. You can imagine the interesting position I was in when we had a--and I think it was a strike I think two and a half years ago in my district--on the one hand I was meant to be on a B.C. Ferry and Marine Worker picket line, and on the other hand I was trying to go into schools to keep them open. And, I think the fact that my constituents are still electing me, and the fact that certainly, in our neck of the woods, it's realized that you can be both management and union, and that there are some benefits to being schizophrenic because you can see both sides of the issue. I think this holds me in good stead, and I hope holds us all in good stead. We have a group here--as I said to somebody at breakfast just this morning--90 per cent of whom would have been, I would have

guessed, pretty ardent BCTF supporters, a large number a couple of years ago. I still hope you are BCTF supporters, for maybe different reasons, but I think that very fact can hold us in good stead. I wanted to hear people's other comments and questions and to hear Albert, so I won't keep you any longer. As I was listening to you talk about professionals, it was interesting that that did come at about the 27th minute in your speech, which I think is interesting when you think about professionals. I'll let you think about that one, folks! And finally to Bob Buzza, I know Bob wasn't telling me to grow up, I know he wasn't doing that--my wife does that, my kids do that, my workmates do that, I know Bob was saying we'll all grow up together. Thank you, Bob.

As host of the conference, the principals' representative, George, will kick off.

(George) Thank you, Dallas. Albert, my first question relates to what we see ourselves as administrative officers, as teachers of children. Principals and vice-principals in the province of British Columbia are also teachers, the vast majority of us teach, and for the few of us who don't in the larger schools, if we're not teaching kids, we're teaching teachers. I would like to ask you to put that dilemma, if you will, into the context of your experience over the past 20 years. You described that the managers of principals and vice-principals were managers, and were not part of the teachers' scenario. We're dealing with a difference in our area here in the province of British Columbia. Could you put those two together and make a prediction or a suggestion of what direction do we take, what do we do to promote and to ensure that we can get from A to C, without going through that 20 years.

(Albert) Well, what happens in your bargaining is going to reflect the thoughts and experiences of the teachers, so that if they don't see you as managers and if you're not compelled in terms of your new legal role to take on the role of managers, that may also be, I don't know the extent to which legislation changes your role other than your union relationship. If there isn't that feeling on the part of we didn't come along and create that feeling on the part of teachers. We reflected it, we organized it, and in some cases we may have fanned the flames and exacerbated a little bit, but we didn't create it--that relationship was there. The principal was the boss and he/she was definitely treating teachers in certain ways, which he had to because that was the nature of the job, and teachers were feeling certain ways about it. If that isn't what happens here, then I'm sure you're going to find that those things that don't bother people aren't going to end up being put on the table as things that bother them. Now the business of going from A to C or A to D, or something like that, the only places in the United States right now that are doing any of these wonderful and creative things are places that have certain things about them that are very interesting. They are places that have strong leadership on both sides. That is, there is a strong superintendent in the district, and a strong union leader. It does not happen where that does not happen. Secondly, it happens only where both sides are very secure. That is, there is no union leader who suggests doing any of these things, or who agrees to do any of these things that are interesting, if he thinks that (1), if I lose three per cent of the vote I'm out--I can't take a chance--or, a superintendent who says I have a school committee that's like that, and boy, somebody is going to grab onto this and I don't know if I'm going to win or lose.

Third, this does not happen in a district where the union is afraid it's going to lose members because it does this. Almost all these places are places that have an agency fee or there is no rival organization around. In other words, you need the leadership, you need the vision, but you also need a lot of security. Now, I don't know whether you can jump stage B. For instance, I don't know if I could stand in front of my members and lead them in some of the directions I've led them unless in looking at me they can say, "Gee, he went to jail twice. He lead the longest teacher strike in the country. He's in Woody Allen's movie as having dropped an atomic bomb." I don't know if anybody else in the United States could have done some of the things that we are doing. And I don't know whether the BCTF doesn't have to go through, both at the local and at the provincial level, a set of new relationships with its own members in order to put them--I mean you can't really deal in the outside world unless you have your own house in some kind of order. And whenever you change the rules there is a certain amount of disorder. At least, you don't know exactly what the order is right now. The main thing, though, that management has to look at in these things, is that you've got to be looking for ways of creating security for the organization. The more insecure it is, the more it will have to be responsive to the furthest-out member--the more insecure it is in terms politically of its leadership, of its budget ... it's like something that happened yesterday. Some superintendent came up to me--a prominent superintendent in one of our big cities in the United States--and said that he was in some kind of trouble because of something that he had done. And the first thing I said to him, and I was being just very open, I said well, what do you want me to do, do you want me to praise you or attack you--which will help you. Seriously, I'd been wanting to deal with that guy for a long time, and sometimes I help him by hitting him. And his school board says great! Or the people in his community say it's terrific! He needs that once in a while. By the way, your public will not tolerate it if you all go around loving each other all the time. They will say what do we have management for. Don't think of it all or one, but in the long run situation, you've got both sides have to create a situation where the other side is secure. Otherwise, you're not going to be able to enter into these relationships. The other part of it which we learned from bargaining in the 60s and 70s is that if you get into all sorts of public contests where the union feels that it is going to win in negotiations by dragging out everything that's lousy about management into the public--and then if management turns around and says that the union is just defending a lot of incompetents and make-work, and a lot of this and a lot of that--the public will believe all of you.

Owen...

(Owen) Albert, I'm probably going to ask the same question in another way. One of the people who write about you says that you epitomize militancy gone straight. But when you look at the evolution, it's been two decades, it's been '68 to '88. And when I read the sorts of things that you write in your weekly column, where you look at class size in terms of efficiency as opposed to human contact, and when I see you encouraging locals to negotiate contracts which allow administrators and teachers to opt out of the provisions in the master contract--you are light years ahead of where we even envision ourselves as being. And I still have to ask the question, do we have to go through all the skirmishes, do we have to fight all the battles, do we have to have all the wounds bleed, do we eventually have to wear the

scars before we can get to peace? And is it going to take twenty years? And if not, what are the magic strategies?

(Albert) Well, let me just tell you. In my own case, it didn't have to take that period of time. I was trying to do something like this in '67 and '68. I had no partners. I wouldn't have done something like this in '61, '62, or '63. I needed confrontation. I had 2,400 members and I had to bring 50,000 people in. I wasn't going to get noticed by being quiet. And I also wasn't going to get anything out of the Board of Education or out of the city by being quiet. The only way we were going to get anything out of them was to be the same sort of disaster you had when you had a snow storm. I mean somebody had to find money, they had to find ways of bending rules, they had to find ways of justifying dealing with us in the absence of law. There was a small period of time when no matter what the other side did, we, in order to put ourselves together, had to behave in the most militant fashion. That was a very, very short period of time. Now as soon as we got our second contract, I sat down with the Board of Education and said how about a two or three year contract. We have now proven that we are militant--we need a period of stability. The answer by the board was, we can't commit a second year's fund so it's got to be one year at a time. So it was the union that had a pressure for longer term relationships. And ever since that time, which was very early on--1966 actually--we essentially were in a militant stance from '68 after that in a defensive stance. That is, we were militant. We were essentially preventing the school board from trying to do various things to us, it wasn't the type of militancy where we were out trying to grab the world. So, you not only have militant unions, you also have militant management. You are going to get some of these people who are negotiators that you hire who are going to say you can look great, just take them on. Pick this item or pick that item. And it will sound great, and will indeed be great and if you actually go out and do that you will get terrific editorials and people will shake hands with you and everything else. What you do when you do that though, is that you destroy long-term relationships. I don't know, I can't answer the question of whether you can skip the stages. These things are matters of art, they are not matters of science as you know. The whole question of how you get lots of people, both in your community and inside the union the union and into management too, to move together--not to do it mechanically but it's like conducting a symphony. It's a creative act and there are sensitivities that are there, and I cannot say this can be done here or it can be done elsewhere. I don't think that it's impossible, but it really all depends on your history. And a lot of it is going to depend on what you do now. If you were to get into a room and if you were to decide where you were going to end up two or three or four years from now, and if you were to get an agreement on that, you would probably find ways of getting there.

Bob...

(Bob) On a different subset, Al, I want to test a perception rather quickly and then raise the question. You touched on this with some background in your remarks. The only real example we have in Canada of what's taking place here is in Quebec, and that was about 20 or so years ago. And I checked this general perception with people from Quebec fairly recently. One of the people I phoned had just spoken to Frank Roemer as a matter of fact. The perception is that the euphoria that some principals felt initially because they are now separated out and their management rights have

been sharpened--and that's certainly what has happened here--gives way fairly quickly to a different perception when reality in terms of the contract starts to abridge and dictate what is feasible for them. I'd like to test that perception in terms of what is likely going to happen here. You know us better than any other U.S. teacher leader--you know this province better. Then I'd like to raise the question as to what can be done in spite of the fact that we are into foundation contract negotiations, in spite of the abridgement process by creative principals, superintendents, to involve teachers in decision making significantly.

(Albert) Well, let's take the first half of it. The first half of it is that at least in our experience in the States, not just New York City but all across the country, that principals responded--ended up feeling very much alone and beleaguered as a result of this type of bargaining process. After all, the contract gets negotiated at central board headquarters, and the central committee is very much interested in money and some central regulations, and the thing that got negotiated away more than anything else was the rights of the principal. And then the principal is told to run his school and carry out these things, and everything that management managed to put in there that teachers didn't like, you're the one that has to deliver and enforce. So you get to be the deliverer of stuff you didn't believe in in the first place, you get the stuff whose prerogatives and rights are limited or taken away, and the whole procedure ends up with people coming to you and blaming you at the first step. And theoretically you've got the right to make decisions there too, and take the rap for it. I must say that the whole insecurity of the principalship goes right down to the current models of professionalism. And that is that central boards and superintendents and teachers find it a lot easier to sit down. And then the big question mark now is what is the role of the principal in a new type of school? And once again, middle management gets very much squeezed and if you've read Peters and Waterman and that type of literature, it's very much like what happens in middle management in other sectors. So that it is extremely difficult. If you function as management it is extremely difficult. It can be different if the relationship is different. And if I can take a minute or two--I saw a school in Germany a year ago which I've written a lot about. I guess a lot of Americans are going over there because it is a rather unique school in terms of many things. One of them has to do with the relationship of the principal to the faculty. It's a school in Cologne. It's a secondary school--it runs from fifth grade through age 19. In Germany they test all the kids at the age of four and those who score high go to gymnasium and those next go to ??????? and then ??????. This is a comprehensive school, which means that kids from all these different categories can go there. But, of course, if you are smart enough to go to gymnasium you are going to go unless you are really a radical who wants to prove that you should mix with the masses, and there is not many of those. So, basically it's a school made up of those two bands of kids who are told that they are too dumb to go on to college and do academic work. Here's how the school is structured. The school is made up of teams of teachers, so that if I come in I'm told, "Al, you are part of a team. Go down to Room ____ and you'll meet the six other teachers on your team. Kids are coming in in a few days, here's a list of all the kids your team is going to have. It's your job to decide how to break them up into classes and groups, and nobody else's. You can re-shuffle them anytime in the year without asking anybody in the administration. It's your job to figure out whether they move 45 minutes or stay a whole day with some subject, and if you find it's too long or too short,

as a group you can make the decisions as to what the allocations of time are. You decide which members of your team are the experts in different subjects so you can all work to your strengths. Next thing is, we are never going to hire a per diem substitute. If any teacher is absent, we've already given you an extra one, we don't think that people that come in for a day or two gain the respect of youngsters, so we've already given that person. Organize yourselves in such a way that if anybody is out, you can handle it yourselves. Next thing we want you to know, is that these kids are coming in in two days in the fifth grade. This team of teachers is going to be with these kids until they graduate at the age of 19. You are not going to say you inherited them from a teacher who ruined them last year. And you can't wait to pass them on to the next one. You are going to look at yourselves in the mirror and know that whatever happens to these kids, as much as any school or group of adults can do, we are morally responsible. You are going to get to know their sisters, brothers, mothers and fathers, and you are going to get to know each other as teachers. And any one of you that ruins any kid and makes it worse, is going to make it worse for everybody. And anyone who doesn't work is going to make it worse for everybody. Now, there are only three administrators in this whole school--the principal and two assistant principals. Under German law every principal and assistant principal must be in the classroom at least six hours a week, so they are all teaching part of the time. The governing structure of the school is very simple. Essentially everyone of these groups is a school--a self-contained school. What happens is, there are two people elected from each of these teams. One is elected to a curriculum committee so that this year's fourth grade can ask last year's teachers about the things that they did and to share ideas. By the way, the whole school operates through co-operative learning also, there is no lecturing. The other thing is that each of these teams elects someone to a faculty senate and the principal presides over the faculty senate--may make proposals and so forth--but nothing can happen within the school in terms of rules and regulations or anything else, without approval of the majority of the faculty. Now there, you have a very collegiate model. No grievance is taken to the principal, because the principal is essentially not doing anything without getting the power of the faculty in the form of a ratification. So any teacher who is aggrieved, is aggrieved against the rest of the faculty, not against the principal. This school has been in existence for 17 years and--by the way, most of these kids are Turks, Moroccans, Greeks, Portuguese, they are ?????? kids--kids who normally would not make it, they'd send the huge number of people on who passed the ????? and go on to college and university, so it's an academically very successful school. But, I would say, that if you want to move over to something different, get yourself out of the current model by creating something like what I just talked about. And develop a system which is not a labour-management model, or an adversarial model, but one which is a democratic model. Then it just doesn't make any sense to drop a grievance into the lap of, or to try to get all sorts of rules and regulations to constrain the principal, because then you are constraining the faculty of the school.

Charles...

(Charles) Yes, Albert, you talk about the relationships, the teaching teams, the style that you see working within the schools. When it actually gets down to go somewhere else, to go into the bargaining style that's chosen--from the adversarial style that seems to be so popular--I know that

different people have tried different things and you must have seen a few models in the United States. I've read stuff about where Dr. Goldbar from Florida claims to have a 99.9 percent success rate with school boards and teachers. There's the final offer selection, there's the single team bargaining. There's all these different things that are thrown out when we look at bargaining and here we are in a very interesting bargaining situation in British Columbia, and I'm sure this year it's not going to change radically, but in the next few years it may. There may be many opportunities and challenges for us all. What seems to you to work at the bargaining table to create the sort of climate that you are talking about in the whole school?

(Albert) Well, what works really are the intentions of the people on both sides. I go to places where there's a strike going on and I ask the head of the union when's the last time you got together socially with the board members or the superintendent? "Oh, I don't see them except under negotiations." "Well, do you hate them?" "Sure I do. They stink." "Do they have a feeling that if you had a magic button and could push it and could kill them, that you would?" "Yes they do. And I would." "Well, what the hell are you complaining about that they're trying to do the same thing to you? If that's the game you're in, then they've really got you where they want you right now, and so that's what they want." Obviously, if one side wants it that way, the other side has to play that game in order to stay alive. One partner can decide that it's going to be that way. On the other hand, I've had and seen some very mature relationships where very early on one or two people from each side say, "Here's what I need this time to make it through. I absolutely have to have the following things." And then management says, "And here's what I need. I have to bring this back, otherwise the public, the school committee. Also, I need this because I think that a lot of these schools could be a hell of a lot better, and I'm strongly, personally committed to what I want to bring about here." If you can honestly put that on the table very early, and then begin to ask yourselves how can each side deliver for the other side. In the way that it is initially stated, it will sound impossible. But, specifics are important here. At one time in New York City, we had a welfare fund which meant that in addition to salaries, the union set up a trust agreement with the central board to set up a fund of a certain amount of money which we got in order to administer various benefits for teachers. That was a nice thing, because instead of the benefits coming from some insurance company, every time a teacher got these benefits, they got a cheque from something marked "United Federation of Teachers' Welfare Fund" which is a form of union security. It might cost you the same thing to get it from an insurance company and have management do it, but here's a way you can make the union look good. Let them administer it and let them get the credit on a day-by-day basis when people go to a pharmacy and get prescription drugs or go to the dentist or a doctor. And one of the things we did with that was we gave every kid of a member who was going to college, a small amount of money--it was, I think, \$300 or \$400, something like that. At the next set of negotiations there were several black members of the Board of Education who said I'll be damned if you guys who make a lot of money...we've got kids in our community who can't go to college, they can't afford to go to college, they're poor kids. And we're going to take that away from you. And it's not that I don't want kids to go to college, it's just that I can't face my constituents to say that somebody who's making \$30,000 is getting \$400 whereas I've got people who are not working, and their kids can't go. That's a pretty tough one,

and for New York City, given the population of the city and the students, you can't argue with it. He wasn't saying that because he didn't like me personally, or that he didn't like teachers--he was telling me something he had to do politically. Well, it took a lot of time and finally at the last minute I came up with an idea. I said, all right, I know we're not supposed to use these monies for this, but suppose you allowed us to use \$1,000,000 a year of our welfare fund to give 1,000 kids \$1,000 provided that they were (1) meritorious and (2) children in poverty. In other words, we will have a united federation of teachers scholarship program so the very kids that you say can't go to college--we will take that money out of the teachers' fund and use that. And that's what we shook hands on, and every year there is now a ceremony where 1,000 kids of all colors and shapes and sizes, all very poor and very bright, and that member of the board of education who was viewed for months as an enemy, came to each of these to stand next to me to hand out these scholarships. Now, that's not what we're supposed to use teachers' benefit money for--and there's no rule for these things--but, the if you feel at the beginning that you can trust each other, and that you are not going to play games, and nobody is going to stab anybody else in the back, and that your job is to figure out how you can shape what the other guy wants so that it is acceptable to your constituency--then you'll have it. And it's very hard and you have to work at it, and you've just got to be creative.

George....

(George) Let's deal with the internal relationships for a moment. When the government created the legislation to give teachers full bargaining rights, create the union, exempted management out of the bargaining unit, it established the British Columbia College of Teachers, which incorporates teachers, administrative officers, superintendents, assistant superintendents. Do you think that that professional group, the College of Teachers, can take a leadership role and, in fact, maybe a pushing role, a controlling role, in making sure that the constituent groups deal with these relationships?

(Albert) I doubt it, but I think that you can do other good things. I don't think any third party can come in and ... I've seen lots of mediators, arbitrators, all sorts of friendly people who all want to put things together, and there are, of course, people in that business, who, if you have the will in the right direction, they can sometimes be helpful. But basically, it is the leadership qualities, and it's the intentions and the relationships of the people on both sides. What I think the college can do is ... I started this thing by saying that there was this constant tension between the professional and the union side, and as you can see, I started as the unionism is it, and professionalism is nothing but--I'm on the other side now saying that without a strong professionalism you won't have unionism. The other interesting thing that has happened in the states, is that it used to be that the NEA was the professional organization and we were the union. Now we've changed roles. They are now the union who says don't get out of traditional bargaining, and we are now the professional organization which is kind of an interesting thing. But there are certain conflicts between professionalism and unionism in this sense, the interest of the client is not always in the interest of the practitioners. And, there are lots of situations where that is clearly so. You take, in the states, a situation where a school is about to open in September and they're missing 10 teachers in a certain district--or 20, or 50, or whatever--and they just can't find

any competent, qualified teachers. What they always do in the United States--they never even bother to think about it--is they just go out and get the warm body of the right age and bring them in.

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... boys to fight for them and become regulars. You've been used for such a long period of time. It's not nice to have somebody work for 10 years and then say now somebody good has come along. You actually end up politically if you've got enough of them in your membership you actually fight to keep them in. What are the alternatives? One alternative might be if you can't find anybody it might be to raise class size. Well, that's not very good as a working condition. But is it better to have a certain number of kids taught by an illiterate teacher or is it better to have all the literate teachers teaching more kids? Or you might say that you will have your school district reorganized so that you are working on four semesters a year and some teachers can raise their hands and agree to work through the summer and these other kids will go on different things. Or you might agree that the school will operate longer hours and some kids will come earlier and some later and some teachers work longer hours. There are union issues in terms of how long you work people and how hard you work people and what should the compensation be if they do, that's one set of issues. And the other is, is it better to push at the working conditions and make the existing people work harder, and longer, or is it better to lower standards and bring somebody in and ease it up for the others. There's a tension there. It's also if you are going to have teams it may be that not everybody on the team should be of equal status. It may be that there should be some teachers who are certified just as every doctor is an MD, but not all of them are board certified surgeons or anaesthesiologists or pediatricians and different forms of certification play different roles. In the old days if the principal selected people, that would be merit pay. You are selecting people, you're paying them a different amount and giving them a different status. If you have a board you've got some confidence in that develops assessment procedures, we say the following can play these roles so that it's not a favoritism process. The union would find it easier to recognize distinctions that are made on an objective basis a college of this sort than they would if management decided that we're going to separate people in certain ways. I think the existence of a college will not necessarily help you directly with all traditional issues of bargaining. What it will help you to do if you do it right it will give you a lot of credibility with the public. They will say that the educators in this field are not only engaged in an adversarial proceeding but they also give full support to quality issues which emanate from this board. The extent to which all of your constituent groups--BCTF and others--are identified with this not as trying to hurt it but as participating and their members are involved in it. It takes the edge off--are you only this or only that--and demonstrates that you can be both. As a matter of fact there might at times even be a little bit of conflict--it wouldn't be bad if occasionally there will be a little conflicting. You could say our teachers are not only economic animals nor are they people who are unconcerned about the economic--you've got both of them there. I think that the college can do some very important things but not the stuff you've got to do yourselves.

(Owen) Al, this morning you touched on merit pay. It's not an issue in this province, but you're quoted as saying that putting the merit pay issue

to rest would remove a major barrier to the professionalization of teachers. And in your response to Lieberman's concept of educational specialty boards which would certify teachers, you said that teachers would be unlikely to take kindly to the concept if it became a substitute for other, more basic structural reforms necessary to make teaching an attractive profession. And it seems to me that as yet you feel that teaching is neither a profession nor an attractive one, but it's on route. What sorts of things have to happen for these attributes to become real.

(Albert) Two things. One is the substance and the other is the process. Let me start with process. As to process we've had some very amazing developments in the states in the last four years. That is, the usual process is Al Shanker and the teachers say, "If you give us the following benefits, then they will be good for the schools and the schools will improve." Now what's happening is quite different. In dade County and Rochester and Toledo and a whole bunch of places is that the union and management stick their necks out and do things that are very different and very exciting and then they turn to the public and say, "The superintendent and the union leader go to the newspapers and they go to the business people and say hey! We've done some very dangerous things! We've lost part of our constituency. We've done things that you out there--the business community and public want us to do--but you know something, if these people don't get better salaries and conditions ... if they don't see that you are recognizing the fact that they are doing some dangerous things, we're going to be out." And what happened in Rochester is that they went from \$38,000 maximum salary to \$70,000 in one step. That's never happened in any American community before. Toledo since it went on to some of the programs that I talked about has had an amazing increase. From a procedural point of view I would suggest that one of these days you're going to find out as we found out that reversing the process, sticking your neck out and then saying "hey! We are so good! We've just shown that we're so good and so gutsy, reward us!" is a much better strategy than saying we will be gutsy and good after you reward us. From a substantive point of view, what has to happen in order to change schools around--we don't know. We've had these same schools for about 100 - 150 years. All sorts of efforts to change things before have failed. And there have been a considerable number of efforts. We think that there is some reason to believe that you could make some changes now that would work because there are some things that exist now that didn't exist before. One of the things that's available now is technology. I'm not just talking about kids playing with teaching machines, I'm talking about the fact that there have been previous experiments with teams of teachers and teams of youngsters in a variety of ways of reaching them and so forth. And they're not around anymore. And they're not around anymore because they demand of teachers that they be constantly creative. That's too much of a demand to make of any human being. We are all creatures of habit and the only time we think is when we have to. To tell somebody they have to think all the time they burn out very very quickly. First of all, most people won't take the job in the first place. They don't want it. You tell him you're working hard already now you're going to work twice as hard or three times as hard. It may be ineffective to give a lecture to the kids but it's a lot more difficult to think that they read all the books to see which two chapters are the best to give them; to look at 100 different video tapes to see which two are the best of those; 100 different audio tapes; all different computer programs; all different games and everything else. It's impossible, you can't do it. Well, you can now do it because the technology

exists so that if you had 150 teachers trying something out they could put it all onto a national teacher professional database and you could over a period of time develop the same kind of consensus agreement about certain approaches and materials that you do in the world of medicine about which medicines to take. Not only that you could have teachers winning prizes for knocking certain things out of the box and putting other things in. That's only one of the things. We have another problem--the major problem--a profession really has two central parts to it. One is the acceptance and agreements of a common base of knowledge. The other one is dedication to your clients rather than your self-interests. At least in the United States we do not have a base that the profession agrees on. As a matter of fact American educators are anti-intellectual and the major obstacle that stands in the way of doing anything positive ... is teachers saying nobody really knows what works and what doesn't work, it's all a matter of opinion, it's all a matter of one teacher's personality. You can't say that somebody's good or bad because it might work in one case and might now work in another. That's why merit pay is no good, that's why this is no good, that's why that's no good, but nobody knows. The great example of this was we have a national teachers' exam in the United States. It is sold by a commercial company, not everybody uses it, but here's a question that appeared on the exam three years ago. "You are a professional teacher. An angry mother bursts into your classroom and complains about a textbook that you are using. What is the proper professional response? (a) [This is, of course, a multiple choice test, it's a professional examination.] Blame the school committee for buying the book. (b) Blame the principal. (c) Stand on your constitutional rights and refuse to answer. (d) Ask her what book she would buy the next purchases are being made. Now please notice that there is no answer which assumes that an intelligent decision was made which could be defended. That's out of the question. All of the answers are political. How do you get her the hell of your back? Well, you don't get her off your back by getting the school board in trouble--you get yourself in trouble or the principal. Don't get her angry by refusing to talk to her. Supposedly the right professional answer is ask her which book to buy. Imagine going to a doctor and he gives you medicine and you come back a week later and say hey doc it didn't work and I broke out all over. And the doctor says and so what medicine do you want me to give you this time? The height of unprofessionalism is to turn the thing right over to the client. But that's where we are now. I would say the biggest problem is that we've all been educated in the same kind of schools, not just since we're teachers, but since we're kids. And the biggest problem is the generation of imagination of another world that might be.

(Bob) This isn't unrelated at all to what Al has just said. He mentioned tension with respect to the union and the professional models. The federation is stating that it's a union of professionals. Now we know that stress tension is typically beneficial. I'm not sure what terms you're using. Part of our problem in this province is that some people feel that they are purer than others because they are professionals. But when we define the terms, quite often I find that we haven't even agreed as to what we're talking about that gives rise to this feeling of superiority. So possibly you could comment on the stress, the tensions as to whether it's beneficial or not and elaborate a wee bit on what the word professional connotes in your view.

(Albert) I just indicated a profession is an occupation which has a knowledge base. It's quite complicated, it can't be a very simple knowledge base, and it is a knowledge base which has to be applied in different ways, that is, judgment as to the exercise. You can have an extensive knowledge base in some areas which can be mechanically applied. A profession is justified where no one from above can legislate the way in which you use that knowledge because particular things that surround the incidents demand judgment in the application of that knowledge so that you have an extensive knowledge base in medicine but you can't have state legislation that says every time shows the following symptoms give them this particular medicine because it depends on whether you are suffering from other disease, taking some other medicine, what did your parents have, what's going around the neighborhood? Somebody's got to put all that together. So professionalism is very very closely related to the existence of a knowledge base, its complexity and the need to allow the individual practitioner the power to exercise judgment. Now that is not the power to do any damn thing he wants. You're not going to have a doctor who says I know what everybody else would do, ha ha, but I want to be creative here. On the one hand you don't just want somebody who is doing their own thing and on the other you don't want anybody telling the doctor what to do from far away. You want somebody who is self-disciplined. And therefore can exercise judgment and therefore do the best job. The other part has to do with the conflict between self-interest and the client's interest. You don't want the doctor giving you a medicine because you own stock in the company. You assume that he's going to give you the medicine that's best for you and not what is best for him in terms of making money. It's not so easy in other professions either. You find that when you have medical schemes where people go out and pay fee-for-service, there are a lot of unnecessary hysterectomies where people have paid the doctors in advance through group practice, there aren't enough of them. In other words economic consideration do play a part in the practice of every other profession even if in an unconscious way. So we shouldn't hold others up as gods that somehow they eliminated. I just think that somewhere in between the notion that we do everything on a basis of sort of what is abstractly good and therefore the people in the profession can't have any rights all the way over to the other thing, namely, that there is no such thing as right and wrong but we ought to protect the interests. It's somewhere between that the tension itself and the conflict does end up in coming up with some good answers. I just want to say that in the United States we felt that in moving teaching toward a profession that the union itself couldn't do that. That we couldn't be viewed as the group that's out there fighting to defend people, and fighting for their rights, and fighting for their benefits. But we might be viewed as a good force. Being viewed as a good and positive force as being different from being viewed as being passionately concerned only with one area of things, namely, what is sort of good for children. We therefore suggested that an independent body be created called the national board for professional teaching standards. The teachers be in the majority but that there also be public members. The United Autoworkers over the years has had a very interesting thing. It developed years ago an independent judiciary. It developed a review board which enabled members to appeal decisions of union officials if they felt that their basic rights were being violated. In other words, is it possible for an organization to limit its own power through the establishment of semi-independent institutions--the Supreme Court in the United States. In that way I would do the college here. As something that will have a close relationship to the constituent groups and especially to the teachers. If

the teacher don't have faith in us it's not going to work no matter how good it is. If you create something that's being viewed over and above and separate from something that's viewed as being negative by the constituents, it's never going to turn anything into a profession or further the interests of the profession. It's got to have that support. At the same time it has to have enough independence so that it could make certain decisions that might contradict certain things that are done on the self-interest side. We feel so strongly in the States--we feel very strongly that we can live with it, it wasn't done to us or for us, we did it and we're now before the Congress trying to get initial funds. We're out there raising money for a body that may end up saying that in certain ways the things that we are not right.

(Charles) Albert, your dogs won't eat it; lemon factory comments; your figures about the standards for teachers; your comments about teacher shortage which is one that we share in British Columbia today. Then your figures about the amount of students that you would need out of the universities in the next 11 years, it comes back, and it comes back to me anyway, to, you have this problem. As a society we have problem where we keep saying we want to attract the best people to an honorable and good profession. We want to pay them what they should be paid to do that profession, now, where are they coming from? If they're not going to be the lawyers or the doctors or the whatever.

(Albert) This is really a process that takes a long, long time, but I'll make it short. But you really ought to go through the work yourself. Basically there is no other profession that is this large assumes that all of the practitioners in it are going to be of that uniformly high calibre. You can't get that many people. If you've got them you get them at the expense of the other things that your society needs. Given the percentage of people in all of our society who are teachers which is a very substantial proportion of the educated people in college. If I translate this into medical terms, if, in the United States, at the turn of the century, the doctors had decided that anybody who did anything with a patient whether it's medicine or whether it's an X-ray or whether it's a test, they all had to be doctors. Then instead of 500,000 doctors in the United States today, we'd have 7,000,000 doctors. They would be paid less than teachers and there would be principal doctors standing over them telling them what to do because no one would trust them because they would be taken from a totally different calibre and level of people. In my view what we need are not 2.2 million teachers but in order to professionalize teaching, you probably need 500,000. What's you need is a different organization of schools. What you need is something like a law firm or an architectural firm or engineering firm or a hospital. That is, you have to think of the people who are really great as holding this title. If you want to let other people be teachers and develop some new titles, that's alright, we're just playing with names here. Essentially what you need to do move over to some form of group practice and of the fact that someone becomes a senior partner in a law firm does not remove him from the other lawyers. You organize the practice in such a way that the person who is outstanding continues to practice. He doesn't stop practicing. Secondly, that person then plays a key leadership role in what the other people within the firm do. If you did that, if you had a school in which kids were not dependent on lectures but in which they were engaged in their own work either through co-operative learning or through the use of technology or through peer tutoring or through a whole

bunch of other things, you could now have a smaller number of very very highly paid teachers. You could have a head of a team who is paid \$100,000 or more; you could have some others who aren't quite there but who could be helped and very helpful; you could have interns and residents who are on their way to becoming teachers, who would play the same kind of roles that they play in hospitals--as in they can't do anything unless the doctor says that now I have confidence that you can do it so go ahead; and you could even have volunteers in hospitals. You don't want volunteers in a room where you're lecturing because the volunteer will either distract the kids or be a witness. But if you're not lecturing, if you've got lots of different kids doing different things, if a school is a lot more like a Boy Scout troop where the kids are all helping each other or using materials or games or other things, then everybody can be of great help. The answer to it really is you ought to settle for what every other intelligent profession and occupation does and that is fewer people. You have to be less job-intensive, you've got to stop moving your best people away from the work site and down to central headquarters, bureaucracies, elsewhere, move them way way up front and just as you're going to throw the responsibility for learning onto the kids, you're going to throw the responsibility for managing onto teachers and that's going to be way up front. In the United States the percentage of operating budgets spent on teacher salaries as a percentage of total operating--this is no capital, no school construction or anything else, just operating budgets--spent on teacher salaries is 39 per cent. Ten years ago it was 45 per cent, 20 years ago it was 50 per cent, 30 years ago it was 55 per cent, turn of the century it was 95 per cent. What has happened during this whole period of time, more and more helpers, not all principals, some guidance counselors, bilingual specialists, reading co-ordinators, curriculum this, that. Teachers have such a wonderful life now with all these people helping them. Don't ask the teacher, they won't say that. You get a proper share of the talent by not asking for a disproportionate share. If you ask for a disproportionate share, and staff yourself in such a way that you need four times as many good people as you're ever likely to get, you will not get very many good people and not only that your profession will be judged by the least competent who are brought in so that while we now have in the United States--if you've got a really bright kid in college and the professor says Al what are you thinking of going into and Al says I'm going to be a teacher and the professor will say a teacher?!? But you're so smart? That is a daily occurrence. It's tragic. What you get is if you get a profession that takes in people who can't do sixth grade arithmetic the image of the entire academic community and the image of the entire world is that--that's what that job is for, is for people who can't do sixth grade arithmetic and if you go into it--why are you doing it? What's the matter with you? And you've got to justify to the world why you're doing that. Until you create the feeling and you create the feeling with the reality, it's a tough job to get, it's very rewarding in terms of money and prestige, it's something you compete to get into, once you do that you'll get all the people you want. They'll be lined up, just like they lined for med. By the way, business administration used to be the place before World War II in the United States--if you were flunking in school the dean would call you in and say you have flunked. Now you're either leaving or you're going to go to ed school or business administration. After the war business administration decided to become graduate degree instead of an undergraduate program and said we will only take high calibre undergraduates. And it's now one of those things where the best and the brightest are lined up because you can really do something with it. The

way you do it is you just got to shut the door on all the people who are not qualified and you've got to reduce your numbers.

(George) On this new school concept we're talking about where co-operative learning is going to prevail and the teachers will be working together in teams holding their own accountability. I see as we develop or get to that there's going to be a significant change in the roles of a number of us there. If the principal who is presently there now is in fact the principal teacher he will likely be okay, but if he's more on the manager's side than he is on the principal teacher's side he may have a few difficulties. Looking at that from the point of view of the teachers, staff members, that the teachers who are comfortable with taking on these responsibilities, they're going to be fine too, but those who aren't are not. My question then is related to what's happening right now and what do you see with respect to retraining, in-service training, professional development for the teachers, for the administrators and so on in order to implement this.

(Albert) In the first place, teachers have exactly the same problem-you have a lot of teachers who say I'm a traditional teacher, I came into this because I stand up there and give lessons and I do it very well and the kids love me and the parents love me. And a lot of parents want their kids to go to a traditional school. Greatest resistance would probably not come from teachers or principals but you have some illiterate mother or father who would come in and say I want my kids to get the same wonderful education I got. My answer to you is that this is not something that you can do right away. First of all, we're not doing worse than we used to. We're doing better than we did before. It's like the 1988 American car is a lot better than the 1950--the big difference is that there were no Japanese cars around in 1950. And nobody buys an American car today because it's better than the 1950. They'll only buy it if it's better than the competition. So, we're doing better but in spite of that we're losing. But we're losing because the outside world is changing. The nature, the ecology. The first thing we explain to our own people so that they don't feel that their work is so damn hard and things are getting worse and it's their fault. It isn't. It's not their fault. They're working hard and doing better but somebody did something which changes things. So that's first. Second and one of the greatest reasons that it's hard to get change, is change in the past was brought to us by a lot of people who are very arrogant. They knew they had the answer. I've got the idea, the rest of you are stupid, you're lazy, you don't have the vision, you don't really care for the kids, the handful of us who are doing these wonderful things are terrific and the rest of you stink. If I had a firing squad I would take care of you appropriately. That's what I think. Well naturally, everybody else in the school and the system just couldn't wait for you to fall on your face, you arrogant S.O.B. What you had was hostility and rejection. First of all it's going to be very slow. We're talking about 10, 20 or 30 year evolution. You can go out there and talk to any big corporation, ask them if they are going to really turn out something new or change their corporation--what sort of a timeline are they are thinking of. Nobody will tell you 2, 3, 4, or 5 years. Nobody. It takes you five to ten years just to get the people in your organization just to accept the fact that it's going to be different. You're changing a corporate culture here in terms of business administration, and you're not going to bring about real changes in a short period of time. What you need to do as you change around is to create places where you can experiment with some new models because most of the new models you are going to try aren't going

to work. You need time because doing something is messy and you're going to make a lot of mistakes. The people who try are going to make a lot of mistakes. The initial effect of something new is going to be worse than what you're doing now. You will not turn out a finished model of what a school or school program ought to look like out of your head that's going to be better than what you have now no matter how bad what you have now is. It will be messy. One thing that you have going for you is that it's messy and you've got a lot of people thinking about it and fooling around with it and if you give them five to ten years to fool around with it--ten years from now they may have something. For a piece of your current school it's a hell of a lot better than what you're doing now. But it's not going to happen in two to four years. How does a school committee do something that's actually going to have something be worse for a while... it's just like the auto companies, GM is continuing to produce Cadillac and Buick and Pontiac and everything else. They haven't stopped their old cars. They're losing a share of the market each year, they're doing the best that they can to make them a little better, but they aren't going to shut down the car business to wait for the Saturn to be built. They are trying like hell to build a better car that's going to knock the Japanese out of the American market. Meanwhile, you got to continue running this school system because it's the only one you've got. You know it's not the one you want and you know it's not the one that's really going to sell in the long run, so you've got to be producing this new product. The first prototype of this product is going to have a lot of bugs in it. You're going to need time to work and rework it and everything else. Unlike education where these people think these people are horrible because they're doing the same old thing, and these people want these to fall on their faces because they're arrogant. In GM these people are damn glad they're looking for some new model that's going to preserve their jobs and these people are damn happy that they're still making Cadillacs because they're the ones who are paying their salaries because they're not producing anything yet. What we're proposing in the U.S. is something like this, we're proposing the notion that there should be the creation of charter schools. Henry Hudson came to the U.S. under a charter that he received. Christopher Columbus was chartered by Isabel and Ferdinand. The idea of a charter is that a group of people come up with a mission plan because they think that they get somewhere that's never been gotten before. Some agency that has the power to give them the provisions and the monies and everything else looks it over and looks over the plans. We want to encourage teachers in teams to become entrepreneurs. Suppose you had a provision that said a team of six to fifteen teachers, if it comes forth with a plan to govern themselves, and a provision which shows how they will account for the fact that kids learn in different ways, learn at their own rate, that teams of kids can shape each other up in ways in which individuals can't. You would specify five to seven things and you would say that any group of teachers that come to us with this, we will grant them a charter. That means we will allow them to be a totally autonomous unit within our school system for a period of seven years provided they can keep the customers. You can't force any parent to have the kid experimented on. They will have to go out and get their customers. By the way, that school in Germany is a school of choice. No parent has to send a kid there and no teacher has to teach there with huge lines waiting. Suppose you set up something like that as a beginning. That would mean your traditional principal--you want to stay there fine, we've got lots of room for you because the new world isn't going to be around for 10 or 20 years. The principals are retiring faster than teachers are. They're older. They were teachers

first. Principals want to involve themselves in these charters, that's where you're training is going to be because there is no college or university than can prepare you for this. Colleges and universities don't change things around, it's those of us in the real world who do different things after we do them differently the colleges come and they look at us and they see what we've done and then they offer courses to teach people to do things the way we did. The initial training is on the job and creating of a new institution. The school committee is good because when parents or other complain about this group over here is doing, they can say we had a public meeting and we issued a charter and now they're on their own for the next seven years and the parents are still sending their kids there. What we need to do is allow people to experiment over a long enough periods of time. That charter permits that group to modify the union agreement, it permits them not to live under school board regulations. They have to give you a plan in advance and you don't just say to everybody, do your own thing, and they do have to keep their customers, but if you want creativity and if you want the development of a new produce you've go to create an entrepreneurial spirit in what is now a government monopoly and bureaucracy.

(Owen) For you personally the merger of NEA and AFT would probably be like snatching the rign off the merry-go-round. But you've also indicated that the cost of such a merger would probably have to be your retirement. How would Al Shanker, the man who travels 650,000 a year retire?

(Albert) I'd probably be doing the same thing. I've been teaching at Harvard, one course for the last couple of years. I've been teaching about 125 future administrators. It's a graduate course on policy issues. I might do that. I do some writing. I don't know that the price would be my retirement. We have a crazy situation, the NEA is three times as big as we are. If I were in the NEA I'd merge immediately. They are a very well put together organization. I would have to be the one who had the concerns. My only concern would be the organization be open and democratic and I'd have my chance to fight for my point of view and win or lose the same as everybody else cause the things that I'm saying are not the 100 per cent views of all of our members and the things that the NEA is saying which are contrary to mine are not the 100 per cent views of their either. These are matters in which very legitimate disagreement. I have proposed to the NEA that Mary Cotrell or whoever they designate come to each of our conventions each year and talk. And I go to theirs. I've offered to give them space in our newspaper if they would give me space in theirs. I've offered to do cable television where we have something where essentially what we need is to create a community. I would agree as part of a merger if I stand away I would agree not to run for president. I think it would be kind of foolish, I think they have talented people, we have them. I think that if we merge we would not only have 2.2 million people to start with, but I think private schools would come in, I think people who do educational work in private corporations, I think we would be an organization of 4 to 5 million people in five years. And that would be in every single election district. There's enough room in an organization like that for anybody who wants to be in it. If they want me out I would teach somewhere. I would write. I would go around lecturing. I'd be meeting with groups like this doing pretty much the same thing and I think probably if they told me I couldn't run, they'd probably turn around a couple of weeks later and hire me as a consultant and I would do very well.

(Dallas) My head hurts and it's completely unrelated to last night's activities. Panel, thank you, for your participation and for your very thoughtful questions. I think we really truly did get some sense of concerns of the constituent groups and we appreciate that you sat up here and got those questions out. Took some risks. Al, more of informative, scary and inspirational, it has been a truly wonderful experience for all of us having you here this morning and I know I speak on behalf of the entire group in a most sincere and heartfelt thank you taking the time to come and visit us in British Columbia. I know we're going to go through some things that you probably wish we wouldn't have to, but I think we've got a vision in this room of where we hopefully will get to. Thank you.

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