high-level infatuation with military violence. It would have brought out the assassin in him.

The next major work of war was The Thin Red Line, a novel of major dimensions whose rigorous integrity and disciplined art allowed Jim once again to exploit the military world he knew so well. Telling the story of GIs in combat in the Pacific, it is squarely in the gritty, no-holds-barred tradition of American realism, a genre that even in 1962, when the book was published, would have seemed oafishly out of date had it not been for Jim's mastery of the narrative and his grasp of sun-baked milieu of bloody island warfare, which exerted such a compelling hold on the reader that he seemed to breathe new life into the form.

Romain Gary had commented about the book: ''It is essentially a love poem about the human predicament and like all great books it leaves one with a feeling of wonder and hope.'' The rhapsodic note is really not all that overblown.

Upon rereading, The Thin Red Line stands up remarkably well, one of the best novels written about American fighting men in combat. The Thin Red Line is a brilliant example of what happens when a novelist summons strength from the deepest wellsprings of his inspiration. In this book, along with From Here to Eternity and Whistle, a work of many powerful scenes that suffered from the fact that he was dying as he tried unsuccessfully to finish it, Jim obeyed his better instincts by attending to that forlorn figure whom in all the world he had cared for most and understood better than any other writer alive, the common foot soldier, the grungy enlisted man.

His friend at the end, Willie Morris, wrote these words:

Dear Congressman ABERCROMBIE, I hope this is what you had in mind. My friend Jim Jones was sent to Schofield Barracks at the age of 18 in 1939 as a private in the old Hawaii Division, which later became the 25th Tropical Lightning Infantry Division. He was a member of Company F. It would be the division of the memorable characters in Jones's classic novel From Here to Eternity: Prewitt and Maggio and Warden and Chief Choate and Stark and Captain Dynamite Holmes and the others, and it would go through Guadalcanal and New Georgia and the liberation of the Philippines all the way to the occupation of mainland Japan, although Jim's own fighting days would end when he was wounded at Guadalcanal.

Schofield Barracks resonates with the memory of James Jones and the imperishable characters and events he placed here in his fiction, the sounds of the drills, the echoes of Private Robert E. Lee Prewitt's Taps across the quadrangle, the Japanese planes swooping over the barracks of the fateful morning of December 7, 1941.

On the morning of December 7, after the attack started, Jim went to the guard orderly desk outside the colonel's office of the old 27th Regiment quadrangle to carry messages for distraught officers, wearing an issue pistol he was later able to make off with as his fictional Private Mast did in The Pistol.

In mid-afternoon of that day his company, along with hundreds of others, pulled out of Schofield for their defensive beach positions. As they passed Pearl Harbor, they could see the rising columns of smoke for miles around. Jones wrote:

''I shall never forget the sight as we passed over the lip of the central plateau and began the long drop down to Pearl City. Down toward the towering smoke columns as far as the eye could see, the long line of Army trucks would serpentine up and down the draws of red dirt through the green of cane and pineapple. Machine guns were mounted on the cab roofs of every truck possible. I remember thinking with the sense of the profoundest awe that none of our lives would ever be the same, that a social, even a cultural watershed had been crossed which we could never go back over, and I wondered how many of us would survive to see the end results. I wondered if I would. I had just turned 20 the month before.''

It is fitting that Eternity Hall be dedicated to James Jones. He was one of the greatest writers of World War II. Many consider him the foremost one. His spirits will dwell forever on these grounds.

On my last night in Paris heading for Africa and beyond, I left Jim and Gloria vowing someday somehow would I see From Here to Eternity and Jim honored at Schofield Barracks.

James Jones had said to his brother in 1942,

I would like to leave books behind me to let people know what I have lived. I'd like to think that people would read them avidly, as I have read so many, and would feel the sadness and frustration and joy and love I tried to put in them, that people would think about that guy James Jones and wish they had known the guy that could write like that.

They know you at Schofield Barracks, Jim, today, in Eternity Hall. The ghosts of all those who came before to this quadrangle and the shades of all those who will come, know you and they know you love them.

As he neared death, he struggled to finish Whistle, to complete what he had begun with Eternity. The final scene of the novel became the ultimate expression of his passion. Facing the end, he wrote of ''taking into himself all the pain and anguish and sorrow and misery that is the lot of all soldiers, taking it into himself and into the universe as well.''

The universe for James Jones in From Here to Eternity began and ended at Schofield Barracks. The measure of this universe and the final judgment of and about James Jones is to be found in the simple declaration of his dedication:

To the United States Army. I have eaten your bread and salt. I have drunk your water and wine. The deaths ye died I have watched beside, and the lives ye led were mine. From Rudyard Kipling.

''I write,'' Jim said, ''to reach eternity.'' You made it, Jim. Today in Eternity Hall, in Quadrangle D, in Schofield Barracks, you made it. Welcome home, Jim.

THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, the session has now truly begun. We are now contemplating the parameters of the budget. There has been a budget agreement reached between the President and the Members of the House and the Senate, and now we can go forward in a session that has sort of been marking time up to now.

Nothing is more important than the discussion of the budget. Our Nation's values are all locked up into the way it proceeds with its budget. What we really care about we can discover by watching the figures in the budget and understanding that what is really important to this Nation will be reflected in how we score our budget.

The parameters are there. Discussion will go forward. Maybe we will restore the Democratic deliberation process back to the Congress. We were beginning to lose it because discussions were taking place out of sight, off center. Most of the Members were being excluded. There is a budget committee, which we assume would be the primary focus of deliberations on the budget, but that did not happen.

I am told by my colleagues that serve on the Budget Committee that very little discussion has taken place on the Budget Committee about the budget. It was off limits for most of the Members. We have experienced a lot of that this year. It seems that after 1994 and the 104th Congress, when we had the Contract with America, everything was laid out as to where the majority Republicans wanted to take us.

It was refreshing to see clearly what the goals and objectives were. The American people behaved accordingly. Knowing fully well what the party and power wanted to do, they reacted, they responded. There had to be a lot of adjustments and corrections before the election, and things proceeded as they proceeded.

But at least there was a dynamic interaction, a public discussion. We knew that there was a proposal to eradicate the Department of Education, and the republic reacted to that. We knew that there was a proposal to cut Head Start drastically, to cut title 1 programs. We knew those things. The reactions of the public helped to guide what was happening, including guiding the party and powers, to the point where they reversed themselves and changed their minds on some of those critical areas.

This time it is a stealth process, it is a stealth operation, it is an underground operation, it is a guerilla operation. Very little is discussed and laid on the table. We find out about it later. Not only in the discussions of the budget do you have a situation where you have a closed circle, a commanding control group somewhere, at the White House probably most of the time, deciding what the parameters of the budget would be, but the whole process is repeated throughout the entire Congress.

In both parties it seems that there is a great love affair with oligarchists

and kleptocracists, whatever you want to call them, small groups that have the power to make decisions. They think they have the power to make the decisions, they make the decisions and then they hand them down to the body, both Republicans and Democrats.

I understand there is more and more of that happening at the committee level, instead of the whole committee operating the way it did previously at the level of the subcommittee. A subcommittee is a small working group. We have committees, and then the committees are broken down into subcommittees. The whole idea is that you need to get down to a level where it is reasonable for people who are here for the process of deliberation to conduct themselves in a process of Democratic deliberation and come out of it with practical results.

But this year you have subcommittees being upstaged by working groups, small groups selected by somebody, oligarchists and kleptocracists at the lowest level, and then they come back and announce to everybody else that we have made this decision, take it or leave it. We do not want it disturbed. Here is the manna from heaven; eat.

It runs contrary to the Democratic process. I hope that now we have had enough of that in the budget discussions and that we are now going to have a chance really to talk about what it is that the White House has agreed with the Congress to do and how can we really discard some of it and adopt some of it, expand on some of it and go forward to do the business that we were elected to do. We are all Members of Congress. We all come from a district about the same size. We are all elected and we are all basically equal. We ought to have the right, we ought to have the opportunity to at least deliberate.

The majority party has the votes and eventually they will decide what happens. But let us have the dialogue. Let us have the chance to have the discussion. Let us have the American people hear the discussion. Your common sense out there is probably far more valuable than anything that can be done or said in these closed circles.

The average American is superior to the oligarchy that people seem to set up. We always criticize these command and control processes. The Soviet Union collapsed because it had a command and control secret, closed-circle operation. So good sense, common sense could never get into that circle. They kept doing things and making decisions that were out of touch with reality. The reality of the economy, the reality of the Soviet people where they were, all of that was lost because the oligarchy, the kleptocracy, the closed central committee circle made the decisions and everybody else was shut out.

So let us go forward in the budget making process and let everybody have an opportunity to see how the process goes and where we are in this Nation. The President has said that we are the indispensable nation. I really agree.

In this critical 1997, just a few years away from the year 2000, the next century, I think we are the indispensable nation. I really think we ought to think about that responsibility of being the indispensable nation as we shape a budget for this year and for the next year. We are the indispensable nation.

The whole world does not depend on us, but we have a pivotal role. Some things will never happen for the good of the world unless we make them happen. Some things will never happen for the good of our own Nation unless we make them happen, this pivotal generation we are in. Some things will not happen for our own constituency that ought to happen that are positive unless we make them happen.

We have a burden on us and we have an opportunity that we never have had before. We do not have the burden of the cold war on our backs anymore. We do not have to carry the burden of an arms race to the extent we had to carry it before. We do not have to carry the burden of secrecy and suspicion among the largest nations of the world. Most of the industrialized nations of the world are not at war, cold war, hot war with each other. So we can jettison that and go forward.

□ 1945

We ought to realize that probably few Congresses in the history of the United States have had such an abundance of resources and an atmosphere in which to utilize those resources which might do so much for the world and maybe for the universe. We are every day discovering more and more about the universe, and maybe life is out there and maybe we are going to be colonizing moons and planets, and so forth. But here is an opportunity, a golden opportunity.

I had a delegation of the women's group that wanted to get more resources to fight breast cancer. Breast cancer, they say, is escalating, that there is a great increase, geometrical increase in the number of cases of breast cancer. Breast cancer not only is increasing in America and in the developed nations, which always thought that they had the highest incidence, but now they see an increase in breast cancer in places that did not have so much breast cancer before; and other kinds of cancer of course also seem to be on the rise.

I do not see why the meager resources that are available for this kind of research, research of other presently incurable diseases, or diseases with a high rate of fatalities, I do not see why we should hesitate, I do not see why we do not have crash programs, I do not see why we do not dedicate ourselves to the proposition that everything that can be done to eliminate, eradicate, or reduce the damage done by these diseases can be done.

Mr. Speaker, we are the indispensable Nation, we are the pivotal generation within an indispensable nation with the resources available. There has never been a nation as rich as the United States of America, never the kind of resources available. I do not see why we cannot look at the President's education proposals and say that those are part of our responsibility as an indispensable nation. Let us look at the fact that we are in a position to educate more people than any other nation in the world, educate people in the sciences that relate to health care, that relate to finding cures for diseases like breast cancer or diseases like AIDS, et cetera.

We do not have to carry the burden on our backs totally for the whole world. We should not be so arrogant as to believe we do, but we are pivotal. We can do more than anybody else, and to do less is to fail the world at a point in history where it needs us very badly.

If we had an education agenda which said we are going to go forward and educate as many young people as possible, give them everything that they need in order to fully realize their capabilities and their abilities all the way, so that they can become the scientists, the technicians, the writers, whatever we need in order to help guide the world, they can become that.

In the area of science, in the area of biology, in the area of medicine, we know that if we have more people working, looking for the solution, working toward a solution, looking for a solution, if we have more people doing research, if we have all of the combinations and permutations being examined and reviewed, tested, then we are more likely to get a cure, we are more likely to get close to the kind of protocols which reduce the damage, et cetera. We know that there is a cause and effect, not a cause and effect, but if we take certain steps with respect to putting researchers out there with the proper equipment, with the proper guidance, we get a result. So we should have no less than we can.

Our schools and our universities should be turning out more students at every level, and when we get to the university level and the graduate level and the level where people do research, we should not have pools of people who are scarce, but the maximum number should be involved. That is what the Nation should dedicate itself toward.

Mr. Speaker, we should have a budget which is not apologizing for the amount of money in it for education. True, we do not know always the best ways to spend money, but I think there is a clear need in certain areas that we ought to address. We ought to address the areas that are obvious first, and we ought to address the areas that are experimental, the areas that have to be tested, and address those with greater gusto. I mean we ought to have more experiments, not less. We ought to have more attempts to examine what does work and to take what works and expand it, to examine the things that are basic to any workability of an education process and expand those.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk maybe about education and some new developments in education that we ought to be very happy about. I want to talk about the education budget and some disappointments in the budget agreement related to education, but I think we need to see it in the context of the bigger budget. The bigger budget is that this great rich Nation of ours is going to be spending billions of dollars, and is it moving to focus the expenditure of those dollars in the wisest direction. How much discussion is there, there is almost none, by the way, of the defense budget and the waste in that budget. How long are we going to continue to waste billions of dollars on defense while we force other programs into a discussion of scarcity? We make it appear that there is an environment of scarcity, of poverty for domestic programs, for programs that really are designed to help people. At the same time, we are flagrant in our waste. Nobody wants to even challenge the obvious waste that takes place in the defense budget. The CIA budget, we are wasting billions of dollars, and in this discussion we are not even talking about it, we are talking about wasting Medicaid or wasting Medicare, and there is always some waste in any program where human beings are involved.

I will not stand here and say that there is no waste. The problem is, the greatest waste is where the greatest amount of money is, and that is in the defense budget. And yet, there is no discussion of why we are going to continue to waste money on defense.

We could get the money we need for breast cancer research. We could get the money we need for HIV research; there are a lot of different causes which are human causes, causes which uplift humanity and will carry us to a new dimension as we go into the 21st century, and they are going to bleed. They are going to compete with each other while we continue to waste money on the expenditure of aircraft that we do not really need, on the expenditure of forces that we do not need overseas, or if we need them overseas, then certainly the countries where they are stationed are the ones who benefit most by their presence, the countries that ought to be the ones who pay for the overseas bases.

We have said this many times, of course, on this floor, but I am going to continue to say it because I think it will get through to the common sense of the American people. There is something that takes place in the atmosphere of Washington that makes people timid about expressing the obvious truth. We do not have a command and control situation here. It is not as tight as the Soviet Union, but I can understand how the go-along-to-get-along theory that Sam Rayburn or some of the other Speakers have counseled young people who come in here, get along to go along or go along to get along theories infect people who come into this body. And there are certain things that become off limits, certain things that they will not challenge.

The young child who saw the emperor was really naked is a good example for us to always keep in mind. Hans Christian Andersen's story of the Emperor's New Clothes, somebody told the emperor he had the best clothes possible and he was finely dressed and they had a cloth that was invisible. And the emperor fell for it, he walked out naked, and everybody was afraid to say what was obvious; everybody was afraid of the emperor, they were afraid of his guards, they were afraid of the whole system, they did not want to be ostracized, they did not want to be called troublemakers. And of course it took a little kid to point, with obvious amazement, that the emperor is naked, the emperor has no clothes on.

The tax structure of the United States is an abominable structure. I have said it many times here and I must repeat it. It is not under discussion. Corporate welfare is rampant as it was before and it still is now. After years of discussion, nobody has the guts to stand up to corporate welfare.

We heard from the chairman of the Committee on the Budget, the majority party's chairman, make some very bold and brave statements months ago about cutting corporate welfare. Well, where are the proposed cuts to corporate welfare in the proposed budget agreement? We do not see any cuts to corporate welfare. Where are the cuts? Where is the attempt to begin to equalize the tax burden between corporations and individuals? Corporations now pay a little more than 11 percent of the income tax burden where individuals are paying 44 percent, individuals and families, and we have talked about this many times before. It was not always that way. They once had a situation where corporations were paying more, and then there was a tremendous shift under Ronald Reagan where corporations went down as low as 6 percent of the overall tax burden and individuals shot up to 48 percent. They made an adjustment, and now it is individuals and families are paying a little more than 44 percent and corporations are paying between 11 and 12 percent.

That discussion is not allowed, it is off limits. We cannot obviously pursue that at all, and there is no discussion whatsoever of doing something about the tax burden, adjusting it, in this budget.

There are some additional goodies for the people who benefit most from corporate wealth. The gap in income is continuing to grow, and whereas we were once a nation that had one of the smallest gaps between the richest people and the poorest people, we now have the largest gap between the rich and the poor. And the gap is growing all the time, but yet we have focused on capital gains tax cuts in this budget agreement. Capital gains tax cut cost us $112.4 billion over a 10-year period, according to some calculations that have been done by some Democratic colleagues of mine; $112.4 billion over a 10-year period will go to the people who are already the richest people in America. Why are we preoccupied with those people, while at the same time we are cutting the budget for Medicare and Medicaid, while at the same time we say we cannot increase the budget for research on incurable diseases.

□ 2000

In the case of the National Institutes of Health, those kind of constructive budgets for life, we cannot increase them but we can decrease the revenue in order to give a tax cut and more money to the richest people.

The estate and gift tax credit will cost us about $40 billion over a 10-year period. The people who will benefit by this particular new provision in the code, the Tax Code, if it is passed, are people who already are the richest people in America. About 3 percent of the people in America would benefit from this gift of $40 billion over a 10-year period.

Why are we doing this in this indispensable nation? Why is the pivotal generation, the people who have a chance to do so much for the world, piling dollars on top of dollars for people who already leave the most dollars? The common sense of the American voters is the only salvation we have, possible salvation. Now is the time for the common sense of the American voters to come to our aid; look at the budget very closely, follow these discussions very closely.

It is confusing, I know, because we have not really made any decisions yet. The budget is behind schedule, and we do not even have an alternative proposed by the majority party.

The President produced a budget in February. The alternative budget or the budget to counter that budget that the majority party usually produces was not produced this time. They decided not to have a budget. It is part of the stealth policy.

Speaker GINGRICH says politics is war without blood. In the theater of war, they decided to try a new tactic, the stealth policy. The gorilla warfare is not to put your cards on the table, so we did not have the majority Republicans producing a budget. They went to the White House instead and said, we will negotiate something and come out with an agreement first.

That has kept it out of sight, off center stage, and now we have an agreement which a lot of people in America think is finalized. It is not. The agreement is not final. There are some things that this oligarchy of negotiators have decided which will not hold, necessarily. The Members of Congress certainly are not puppets. Members of Congress are certainly not paralyzed. It is possible to make this oligarchy back down, and to have some things done with this budget which have not been done. Nothing is impossible, and certainly a lot of things are possible.

There are going to be a lot of changes. We would like to have those changes be made in favor of the people who have the greatest needs. We do not need anymore tax cuts for the richest people in America. We do need to address Medicare and Medicaid in a new way, and stop the assumption that that is the place where most of the money is, and therefore we can keep cutting Medicare and Medicaid.

Members might have heard and read in the newspapers that this budget is good because it restored disability benefits to legal immigrants. Let us applaud that. Let us celebrate that. Members might have heard that Medicare recipients will pay a higher premium, also, $4 more each month; it does not sound like much, does it; or $4.50 per month. It does not sound like much, but why, in the richest Nation in the world, the richest Nation that ever existed, why are we cutting money on the one hand, cutting taxes for the richest people, and on the other hand, we are going to make Medicare recipients pay $4.50 more per month?

The savings that Medicare will yield will come from cutting payments to providers, mainly hospitals and health care plans, as well as the savings that will be gained by the increase in monthly premiums. Why? Why are we being forced to move in a way which will penalize the elderly and the poorest people?

Members might have read also that budget negotiators have agreed to expand health care for about 5 million poor children. That is, again, good news. But there are people who do not agree with that. That is what the negotiators have agreed to do, and it is still in jeopardy because there is a great deal of disagreement about how that should be done.

Five million poor children is one-half the estimated number of children who need coverage. They say there are about 10 million children who need coverage. We think the estimate is much higher, but let us be grateful for a small step forward. Half of the children, 5 million of the 10 million who need coverage, half will be covered with this $17 billion over 5 years.

Will it be coverage by Medicaid, or will they give the money to the States, which is always a very dangerous proposition, and let the States decide? Because States are notorious for ignoring the people with the least amount of power in their States, within their borders. They are notorious for ignoring the poor, and the New Deal and all the programs that were generated by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the 1930's were designed to make up for what the States had refused to do to compensate.

So when you are giving money to the States, always be aware of the fact that they are part of the problem, not part of the solution. If the money to cover children is handed to them totally, without any oversight, which is quite strict, I fear many children who need the coverage will not get coverage.

Administration officials said this budget deal also will cover disabled legal immigrants who were in the country on August 22, when the bill was passed. That is another bright spot. We have proposals to deal with a problem that has overwhelmed some of the congressional offices. I have more people seeking help with immigration problems and problems relating to the immigration reform than any other problem in my office. There are just hundreds of people who fear that they are in dire straits, and are. The threat to their well-being is tremendous.

There are nursing homes that will not admit elderly people who are not citizens, even before the September cutoff point goes into effect. They do not want to have people in the nursing home who are not eligible for Medicaid and then they have to kick them out, so they are just preempting the situation by refusing to admit them. Anybody who is a legal immigrant who needs nursing home care cannot get it, because of the fear that they will not be able to get reimbursed for their services, and already they have begun the tragic course of triage; throwing the elderly overboard.

I just want to break in with a note of optimism, some good news. In the budget the agreement still calls for an increase in the funds for telecommunications and for revamping our schools, so the schools can make full use of the new educational technology efforts. Technology literacy will be promoted as never before, and schools will be all wired early in the next century. All that is very optimistic language, and I prefer to believe we can make that happen.

In connection with that, there was a development which should help schools and students all over the country that took place yesterday. I want to pause from my review of some of the negative elements of this budget agreement to point out the fact that something amazing happened yesterday, and we should all take note of it. It helped the children in Brooklyn in the 11th Congressional District and everywhere else across America. That was an agreement reached by the FCC.

The FCC voted to implement a mandate of Congress. When Congress passed the 1996 Telecommunications Act they mandated that the FCC should make provisions for the provision of discounted or free services to libraries and schools. The FCC acted on a subcommittee recommendation yesterday, and we are off and moving. It is a historic occasion.

The Federal Communications Commission has adopted the joint board's recommendations for providing eligible schools and libraries discounts on the purchase of all commercially available telecommunications services, Internet access, and internal connections. Eligible schools and libraries will enjoy discount rates ranging from 20 to 90 percent, with the higher discounts being provided to the most disadvantaged schools and libraries and those in high-cost areas.

Total expenditures for universal service support for schools and libraries is capped at $2.25 billion per year, with a rollover into the following years of funding authority, if necessary, for funds not dispersed in any one year. That means that $2.25 billion is available for schools and libraries, and those that are in the richest neighborhoods or the more affluent neighborhoods can get a discount of at least 20 percent off the telecommunications service. That includes telephone, by the way.

Most schools in my district have only a few telephones, because telephones at present charge the business rate to schools. They cannot afford to have even enough telephones. There is already technology related to telephones which will allow a school to program their phones so every child who is absent and does not show up, the home of that child can be called off the program that is set up over the phone. But we do not have, in many cases, the adequate phones to do that. We do not have phones adequate enough for the teacher to make the trip to the phone and make the call, because there are not enough available. The teacher would have to stand in line, they would have to go downstairs, in many cases, and deal with lining up at the office, et cetera. Just more telephones would greatly improve the ability of our schools to function.

But more than telephones are involved here. The internal connections, wiring of the schools inside, that can be part of the discounted cost. You can engage a contractor and the contractor can get paid from the funds from the telecommunications industry. In a poor school in an inner city the community, the neighborhood of Brownsville, parts of East Flatbush and parts of Bedford-Stuyvesant, they would be paying only 10 cents for every dollar's worth of services. A 90-percent discount would mean, and I hope I am not oversimplifying it, on your phone bill related to this process you would be paying only 10 cents for every dollar's worth of service. That is a great step forward.

The high cost of wiring internally, the high cost of hooking up to the Internet and maintaining on-line services, all that will be discounted for the poorest schools down to the level of a 90-percent discount. This is not just for this year or next year, it is for eternity. Theoretically it goes on forever.

That is a revolution. That is a monumental achievement, to have that kind of opportunity provided for the schools of America, and the libraries. Schools and libraries are all eligible; not just public school, private schools. Everything that falls in the category of providing an education to elementary and secondary education students is eligible.

This is a great revolution. It is a revolutionary action, in my opinion. We

did not hear any fireworks yesterday, there was no great celebration, only a few people announced it on the television news. McNeil/Lehrer did have a special discussion of it. But it is revolutionary.

It is like the Morrill Act which established the land grant colleges in every State. The Morrill Act is unknown to most Americans. The Morrill Act is unknown. Morrill himself was a congressman who was unknown, but the Morrill Act established land grant colleges in every State in the United States. Every State has a land grant college now, and some of the great universities of America are those land grant colleges. It had an explosion of higher education over a short period of time, relatively.

Morrill proposed it during the Civil War, when America was at its lowest ebb in terms of its attention being focused on education. It was proposed during the Civil War, and later on enacted after the Civil War and fully given appropriations, and it took off.

Practical education was the emphasis. They copied the model of Thomas Jefferson at the University of Virginia, where practical education was the emphasis. Agricultural and mechanical colleges they were called at first, but they understood that they had to teach literature, English, et cetera.

So everything the higher education institutions were responsible for, the land grant colleges became responsible for them, too. They just had an emphasis which was different. They emphasized practical education. The great experiments in agriculture that we have had in this country which put our agricultural industry way ahead of all other economies with respect to the ability to grow food and produce food at a cheaper cost resulted as a result of the Morrill Act.

The Morrill Act created the colleges which set up the experimental stations. They created the colleges which established the county agents who went out to the farmers and got the farmers to make use of the theoretical knowledge that the universities had produced, a great revolution that most of us do not know about, but it was a government action. It was a government action with ramifications and results that continue to flow to the benefit of the American people.

What was done yesterday by the FCC in my opinion will have the same kind of impact and effect. There was another government action when they decided the transcontinental railroad. Most people do not know, it was not private industry that built the railroads across America.

Private industry has always run the railroads and private industry has always been up front, but the government made the contracts and the government offered the prizes to those companies that could build the railroads and link the east coast with the west coast.

□ 2015

They came through mountains and swamps, and they did all kinds of things, but they were paid by the Congress. And Congress had a bonus. If you were going through difficult territory, mountainous terrain, Congress gave more money to the companies than they gave to those who were going across the plains.

The great transcontinental railroad was a government project, and it unified the country in a way which, if we had not had the transcontinental railroad, the country would never have been unified. It made America America, from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

That was a government action. The Morrill Act, the transcontinental railroad and then the GI bill following World War 2.

The GI bill was another one of those governmental actions with revolutionary implications and impact on the American economy in terms of large numbers of men returning to the peacetime economy who got a chance to get an education and who boosted America's industrial might, technological know-how, carried us forward in ways that we never would have gone forward if those men had not had the opportunity to be educated in all walks of life.

I meet lots of millionaires who got their start with the GI Bill of Rights. So governmental action.

Yesterday the FCC took another governmental action which really has to be carried out mostly by private enterprise, but it started with the Congress. It was the Congress that mandated that you have to do this. The mandate to the FCC came from the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and the FCC has followed through on that.

I am very optimistic about the impact of that, because the President of the United States knows the value of telecommunications on education. They have taken steps already. We have funds flowing already to the State education departments and down to the local education agencies to get ready for this technological revolution and take advantage of it.

Any teacher will tell you that their presentation in the classroom can be greatly enhanced if they can use some of the material that comes via the Internet or if they can use videotape of a key moment or if they can use a CD ROM at a key moment. It can be greatly enhanced.

We talk a lot about doing things in the area of education assistance, which gets down to the classroom. Here is one that really can get down to the classroom.

One of the unfortunate things in New York City is that we did a survey several years ago and found that two-thirds of the teachers of math and science in the junior high schools had never majored in math and science. Things have not gotten any better since then, because New York City has had a great program of encouraging the most experienced teachers to retire. In order to save money, the teachers at the upper end of the pay scale had been encouraged to get out of the system. They have been given buyouts and all kinds of inducements.

We have drained some of our best teachers away in the last 3 or 4 years. So the teaching of math and science certainly has not improved as a result of these buyouts and the people leaving the system.

It is as bad as it was 3 or 4 years ago. One way to compensate for that is to have teachers who are not as experienced in teaching math and science, even some who did not major in math and science, have the benefit of the back up of some of the courses that they can get on the Internet or the courses that they can get via educational television or via videos. There are ways to supplement what happens in the classroom, as we try to get over this period of the scarcity of teachers in the classroom, particularly in inner city communities where there are other hardships and problems. Teachers continue to be in great shortage.

The number of teachers who are substitute teachers in my district is far greater than the number of substitute teachers in most other school districts across the country, because they cannot find the teachers who are really qualified and meet all the requirements and can pass the State tests, et cetera. So what you end up with is people in the classrooms, but they are really not the best quality teachers.

We keep imposing new curriculum requirements on the students. We insist that they must take tests, but we have not solved the problem of getting decent teachers.

Finally the biggest problem we have not solved is the problem of physical space and equipment and supplies. It is the most basic problem. One would think that in the richest Nation that ever existed on the face of the earth every student, every citizen could be guaranteed that you can go to school in a safe environment, free of health hazards. That is a basic. That is a basic that we thought the President would help us with in terms of the construction initiatives, school construction initiative that was in the budget before the negotiators finished.

Somehow mysteriously it got kicked out. The President's education initiatives are 80 percent intact after the budget negotiations. We have a lot of things to be happy and optimistic about, but the school construction initiative probably is the one that would have helped the poorest children in America the most.

School construction initiative would have helped to guarantee that the revolution that took place yesterday, revolutionary decision with respect to telecommunications, becomes a reality in the inner city schools. There are inner city schools, there are schools in my district that will not be able to use the 90 percent discount for telecommunications, because the wiring in the

school is such that they cannot be wired for modern telecommunications.

There are some others where they can be wired. However, they have an asbestos problem. If you bore holes, you will find asbestos and the law says that you have to have a certified asbestos removal contractor there. And that is very costly, because we do not have any place in the city to store asbestos. They have to store it in expensive places. It becomes a big problem.

We had NetDay in New York State in September 1996. And in New York City, which is half the population of New York State, very little happened with NetDay. NetDay is a day where you have volunteers come out, and they wire the schools for $500. They get a package which includes all the equipment they need, all the wiring. And they have enough equipment and wiring to wire the library of the school plus five classrooms. So a school is considered wired for NetDay if it wires its library plus five classrooms.

In New York City we could not get even 5 of the 1,000 schools in New York wired in the way in which NetDay really dictates. They claim they wired some schools because they put a special telephone line in. We later found that they were calling that wiring of schools, and it was far removed from the kind of thing that NetDay should produce in terms of the wiring for telecommunications. An enhanced set of telephone lines was not enough. We had far too few schools in a city with 1,000 schools that were wiring for NetDay.

As a result of being disappointed with the results of NetDay, during National Education Funding Day, which was October 23 of last year, the Central Brooklyn Martin Luther King Commission, which is my advisory committee for education, pledged to wire 10 schools in 10 weeks to overcome the problems experienced on NetDay. We picked our 10 schools and said we would wire them in 10 weeks.

We had the assistance of a group called the Hussain Institute of Technology, a volunteer group that has set up a computer practicing center with about 20 computers, free instruction. And they have done wonders with helping people learn how to use computers on the Internet and those people who already knew how to use them have improved their skills so they could get promotions on their jobs and are going to better jobs somewhere else.

The combination of the Hussain Institute of Technology, Martin Luther King Commission seeking to wire 10 schools in 10 weeks has run into all kinds of obstacles, mostly related to asbestos. And we have not wired a single school since October 23. It is now May 8. We have not completed a single school because the wiring cannot go forward until we solve the asbestos problem.

We do not have the money to pay an asbestos contractor to come in. We wrote letters to the board of education, have been on television appealing for help. All kinds of things have happened. All we have gotten is a response from one asbestos contractor who wanted the publicity and said he would provide free service, but when we went to get the free service, he changed his mind.

That kind of cynical playing with children resulted from publicizing our plight. One thousand schools are in New York City and we cannot wire 10. In my district there are 70 schools. Those schools, I only wanted to wire 10, and I cannot get even one wired as of today. We hope we will have a breakthrough soon. The breakthrough will come in the form of giving up on going into the walls, a technique where you wire by stringing the wire outside. It is ugly. It alters the way the building looks. It is another way you communicate to children that your school is not like the others, but it would get the job done.

The proposal is to wire some schools by stringing the wire outside the walls in full view and, of course, the danger is they will be tampering with the wires, but we will go forward and try to get it done. But across the country in all of the inner city communities, you have the same kind of problems: old schools, asbestos problems.

In New York City you have many schools that still have coal burning boilers, boilers that are burning coal. We recently had an announcement by the mayor, this is an election year in New York City, and the mayor, following the precedent set by the White House, is sort of doing what you call the continuing campaign, the continuing campaign as focused on education and schools. Because when the polls were taken, the one area that the mayor of New York City was clearly graded with an F was in the area of education.

The mayor of the city had cut the school budget dramatically by almost a billion and a half dollars. The mayor had waged war on the previous school chancellor. We do not have a superintendent. We are so large we have a chancellor. The previous chancellor had a plan for renovating, building and repairing schools over a 7-year period. He produced a plan that would cost $7 billion, I think. And the mayor literally ran him out of town. He kept after him until finally the previous chancellor resigned, went out of town. Gave up.

The building plan for construction, for renovation, for repairs that the previous superintendent, Mr. Ray Cortines, had prepared, is sitting there on the shelf and still needed because when schools opened last September, September 1996, there were 91,000 children in New York who did not have a place to sit, 91,000 who could not be safely seated.

They say they have solved most of the problems now and when you go to investigate what is happening with the 91,000 that could not be seated, most schools will say, we have taken care of it.

What they have done is they have put children in closets, hallways. They are even a few cases where bathrooms have been converted to classrooms. They say they have solved the problem and school is not overcrowded. But when you go and you ask the question, how many lunch periods do you have, the lunch period is an indicator that it is overcrowded, they cannot feed children within a reasonable period of time. You know they have too many. Some schools, most schools have three lunch periods, three lunch periods. Children start eating at 10:30.

One school I found had five lunch periods. Children started eating lunch at 9:45. They say they are not overcrowded, but if they are forced to start children eating lunch at 9:45 in order to accommodate them, they are overcrowded. We have gotten so used to abominable conditions, conditions which are atrocities against children, until we take them for granted. It is quite all right to feed children lunch at 9:45.

We are moving to try to get some kind of regulation installed or health department edict, something to stop feeding children at 9:45 or even at 10:30. It is bad enough, the period between 11:30 and 1:30, to have children, that is more reasonable, but to go to 9:45 for children who are in junior high school and say you have to eat lunch is child abuse. And it seems to me that something about the physiology of the child is greatly impaired if they are being forced to cram in lunch, and they just had breakfast. But the atrocities are great.

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Overcrowding and the lack of attention to facilities, the lack of money for construction over the years. They have been scrimping and refusing to put the money forward for construction. We have had to close down some buildings because they literally were really falling apart.

Recently the mayor launched an offensive to prove that he really cares about schools, although he ran the chancellor out of town. He did not come forward with another plan. He is now saying he has a long-term plan for the renovation and repair of schools.

Looking at an article that appeared in one of my favorite community papers, the Flatbush Courier Life, it has a very lengthy article describing what happened to the schools, what may happen to the schools in Brooklyn as a result of the mayor's election year initiative.

They had $275 million. The mayor's long-term plan opens up with $275 million allocated to schools for the entire city. When we talk to people across the country about New York City schools, they always get bewildered because the figures are so great. We are talking about a thousand schools. We are talking about a million students. We are talking about 60,000 teachers. So I know one can get dizzy, and that $275

million seems like a lot of money to help renovate and repair schools.

Brooklyn received 44 percent of the allocation, according to the Flatbush Courier Life; $121 million, again, looks like big money but it will only pay for 78 projects in 48 schools. Forty-eight elementary, intermediate and high schools in Brooklyn will get some of the money to pay for 78 projects within their schools.

Now, remember, I have 70 elementary, intermediate and high schools in my district. I have 70. The Borough of Brooklyn has 2.5 million people. So we can see we would have many, many more. Only 48 of our schools will be able to get the assistance for 78 projects.

In Brooklyn we still have more than 100 schools that have coal burning boilers. That should be a first priority, because coal burning boilers produce pollutants. We all know about that. We have the highest asthma rate of any large city in the country in New York City, and we wonder why we have a large asthma rate among children if they are sitting in schools which are burning coal.

New York City is broken down into 32 different school districts. There is a chancellor and then 32 superintendents and one of the superintendents, John Comer, community superintendent of District 22, said, ''We were delighted to receive the preliminary plan which will only enhance our buildings for the children and professional staff. It was long overdue. Hopefully, we can get money every year to restore the buildings in this great city to what they once were. Money like this hasn't come in a long, long time.''

It is just a tiny amount for Brooklyn, $12.1 million. Everyone is singing the praises, but with this piecemeal approach we will fall further and further behind because these are buildings that are 100 years old. In many cases they need new roofs, new boilers, and on and on it goes.

Mitch Wesson, another superintendent for district 21, a school in my Congressional District, ''stressed the importance of boiler replacement. He said about a third of the district's schools were still heated by coal.'' In his part of the district there is a concentration of these coal burning furnaces or boilers. ''We are looking forward to having our coal-fired buildings converted,'' he said. ''Obviously, we're pleased the work is being done. Our superintendent and school board pushed the issue. We hope these repairs are accelerated not just for three of our buildings, but for all of our buildings.''

Desperately everybody is hanging on to hope that the mayor's small beginning will become a reality. It will not be a reality unless we get some help from the Federal Government. It will not be a reality if the President continues to go along with the negotiation that has been reached.

The school construction initiative is no longer on the table, and we are told it cannot be restored. The Congressional Black Caucus pledged that this will be our No. 1 priority. We will fight to get it back into the budget. The school construction initiative must go forward. And if people in certain parts of the country feel it is not needed, let us have an emergency school construction initiative in the inner city schools where these atrocities against children are being committed.

Phyllis Gonon, superintendent of District 18, District 18 has a large number of schools in my Congressional District, he said ''Most of our schools need capital improvements. Most of our schools are falling apart. This building as well.'' The one she is in. ''The roof has leaked for 18 years.'' I repeat, the roof has leaked for 18 years.

District 18 offices are located in the P.S. 279 Annex building, prospective repairs to which she is referring, that is the building where the roof has been leaking for 18 years. She added, ''We haven't been satisfied with the work that has been done on District 18's buildings in the past. Even where they're doing expansions, she continued, at P.S. 233, for instance, which isn't listed, the work has to be done over and over again.''

The buildings are so old. It would be better in some cases to tear them down and start all over again because the repairs do not hold.

Eric Ward, community superintendent of District 17, District 17 has about 26,000 students, it is the largest one of the local districts in my Congressional District, it is wholly within my Congressional District, District 17's superintendent says, ''We are grateful for any capital improvement that occurs in the District. But for every one that has been approved, I have about five others that need to be done. New York City, Mr. Ward adds, has many historic buildings that are beautiful. The city needs to have in place a system for updating, renovating and repairing them. Until the city devises a systematic plan, they will be behind the eight ball.''

Now, Chancellor Cortinez had a systematic plan prepared. Mayor Giuliani has only discovered education is important in this election year. We are going to elect a new mayor in the fall of 1997 and suddenly education is on the agenda of the mayor. But even with city hall making it a priority, the amount of money we can see in comparison with the magnitude of the problem is far too small.

David Gulob, who is a spokesman for the board of education, when he was questioned as to how did they select 48 schools out of a thousand—48 are in Brooklyn, I am sorry, but for the whole city the number will not be more than a 100. A hundred schools in the city at this rate would receive some kind of emergency help.

How did they select them? It appears that there were two pieces to this selection process. Schools that had needs and had submitted those needs were considered because they were on record. And then the board of education sent the list over to city hall and to the city council and they made political decisions about which of the victims would be salvaged first.

We are into a situation where it is so horrendous. The school construction problem, the problem of providing a safe and decent place for children to go to school is such that it has become a political football.

The scarcity of the resources are such that they have to run it past the political process. There is no system where they have an objective list which says that the emergencies are greater here and they have some kind of prioritization of the emergency so that we get the worst situations first. No, it is run by the city council and the mayor, so that political decisions can be made in this great economy of scarcity.

I want to close on a note of optimism. We welcome the revolutionary decision of the FCC to provide telecommunication services to all the schools and libraries in the country at a great discount rate, the discount rate being weighted so that the poorest areas will get the biggest discount. That can do a great deal for the children with the greatest needs.

If they do not have, however, the complementary program of the school construction initiatives proposed by the President, many of the schools who have the greatest needs will not have the buildings in position to take advantage of this great revolutionary achievement of the government and the private sector.

We hope that all Members will hear the common sense of the people out there and understand children need safe places to sit. The school construction initiative of the President must be supported by both parties as we go forward in a bipartisan quest to improve education in America.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. HEFNER (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT), for today, on account of illness.

Mr. COSTELLO (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT), for today, after 12 noon, on account of the death of his mother.

Mr. SKELTON (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT), for May 13, 14, 15, and 16, on account of a personal family matter.

Ms. MCKINNEY (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT), for today, on account of official business.

Mr. PICKERING (at the request of Mr. ARMEY), for today after 12 noon, on account of a previously scheduled constituent meeting.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART (at the request of Mr. ARMEY), for today after 12:15 p.m., on account of official business in the district.