



Seated at the table, left to right—Assemblyman Robert M. Blakeman (R., Nassau), Senator Hunter Meighan (R., Westchester), chairman, Senator Joseph Zaretzki (D., Manhattan). Standing at the left, Speaker of the New York Assembly Joseph F. Carlino (R., Nassau), and right, Mrs. Bernard Trinsey

“Legislative Hearing” on Free Tuition

On Saturday, August 17, 1963 our President, Anna Michels Trinsey, appeared by invitation as a witness for Free Tuition on the CBS-TV Public Affairs program, “Legislative Hearing.” Speaker Carlino appeared as the witness opposed.

Each witness is allowed an opening statement (a minute and a half) and a closing summary (one minute). During the half-hour hearing questions are put to the witnesses by the committee of legislators.

We publish here our President’s opening statement, and excerpts from the CBS transcript of the rest of the hearing.

“I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak, to speak, as I believe, for tens of thousands of college graduates who could not have gone to college had there been tuition fees. I am just one of many thousands in that position.

“New York State cannot afford not to pay tuition, not to pay the tuition fees for our students. We cannot afford to give up any part of the American dream: equality of opportunity, of educational opportunity for all young people.

“Our State cannot afford not to pay the costs for tuition. We cannot afford to keep any young people out of college today, because the over-riding need in our country, in our State, is for the trained intellect. In every field of endeavor, in teaching and engineering, in medicine, in research for national defense and research for health to prevent disease, we need thousands more of trained intellects. Indeed, the United States Department of Labor says that in New York State alone we will need 1,500,000 more college graduates by 1975. We cannot erect barriers now as, I am afraid, the 35,000 students upstate are facing a new barrier, the barrier of new tuition fees.

“New York State can well afford to advance the money; that is all that we are doing: advancing the money to pay for tuition, to cover the costs. Why do I say ‘advance?’ Because studies show—the most recent one in January of 1963, in a report presented by a committee on unemployment to the Governor of Illinois—that college graduates earn, in the course of their life-time, \$150,000 more than non-college graduates. Therefore they pay much higher taxes and they more

than repay the state and the government for the money advanced.

"New York State can well afford to meet tuition costs. I regret very much to have to call attention to the fact that New York State now ranks fiftieth—at the bottom of the list—in state expenditures for higher education. We spend 3.1 per cent of total state expenditures. California spends over 12 per cent; the national norm is 9 per cent.

"We can well afford to take up this cost tuition because of the great returns to society, the great public benefit."

Supporting the policy of tuition fees, Mr. Carlino said, "The Board of Trustees of the State University has promulgated a rule of uniform tuition in the sum of \$425 for all students in all branches of the university. This replaced a patchwork system, wherein in some instances the tuition was more than \$400 and in some instances less. Coupled with this program is a program of aid to the student . . . composed of three parts: the scholar incentive program initiated under the Rockefeller administration where those students in the low income groups will pay no tuition; the policy of expanded scholarships for higher education, where one-third of all the students every year entering the freshman class will receive aid under a Regents' College scholarship and a very generous student loan program, interest free, where a student can borrow to a maximum of \$7,500 to maintain and provide for higher educational opportunity . . ."

When Assemblyman Blakeman asked, "Mrs. Trinsey, do you disagree with the concept that a person who is able to pay should contribute to the cost of his college education?"

The answer came from our witness:
"How many are able to pay? . . ."

"In this state 45 per cent of families, 2 million out of a little over 4 million families, have incomes of less than \$6,000 a year. Mr. Carlino speaks of the fact that students will be able to go to college for free. How many? Only those who come from families where the annual income is \$4,600 a year or less. All other students upstate will have a tuition fee and we must distinguish between a tuition fee of \$200 a year plus a \$25 extra fee.

"Now, if you belong to a family in which the income is over \$11,000 a year, you get—no matter how wealthy your parents—\$100 a year. Every student in the private colleges—there are 67 of them in the state—gets \$100 a year, regardless of need, under the scholar incentive plan, for which \$16,500,000 has been allocated for the coming year. Every student whose parents earn between about \$5,000 and \$11,000, every student in the private colleges, now gets a \$200 a year rebate . . ."

When Senator Zaretzki asked, "Mrs. Trinsey, will you answer the question as to who benefits the most from having college graduates in our State of New York?"

"It is the country; it is the state, without question, that benefits far more than the individual. Professor Whitehead, one of the greatest thinkers of our age, has urged that that country that does not really put emphasis on trained intellectuals will surely not win in the struggles to come. Everyone capable of benefiting by a college education ought to go to college, not only for the private benefit, but particularly because of the public good."

Speaker Carlino then said: "I'd like to challenge that subject. I don't think that the primary purpose of education is to benefit the state. We are not a totalitarian government. Our concept is founded in the development of opportunity in the individual. The individual is the one that is important. It is not the state and it is not the nation . . . I think the primary effort and the primary emphasis is upon the individual opportunity and the development of the individual and not the state and I cannot subscribe to the idea that higher education is designed only for the benefit or the prime benefit of the state or the nation. I think it is for the individual."

At a later point Anna Trinsey commented: "Genius and talent, we all know, do not belong to any income level and may I ask, too, or urge the Speaker to turn his attention to some of the studies made by the educators. There is Henry Steele Commager, who, in a written analysis of the need for society to pay the costs of higher education, showed that 20 per cent of young people were going to high school in 1920; 40 per cent of young people were going to college in 1960 and that we need to send them because the boundaries of knowledge have so far been extended that what the college graduate knows today is really not as much as he should know.

"Professor Commager says that we not only need to send many more young people to college but we need to send them to graduate school and keep them there until they can become expert."

At this point Speaker Carlino said, "Well, our program specifically permits that because excellence in education is rewarded by a large number of scholarships made available by the state, by the federal government and by private institutions, but if we were to follow logically your arguments, Mrs. Trinsey, it would mean the abolition of all private education in colleges throughout this country because if we are going to have or assume on behalf of government the total obligation of financing higher education, it is going to mean that the wonderful private institutions which have been developed in this country over 300 years are going to be eliminated . . ."

Anna Trinsey replied that she had the highest regard for the private colleges, for their scholarship programs, for their students, etc. She pointed out that Regents' scholarships are awarded only to the top ten per cent of high school graduates.

The program drew to a close and we conclude with extracts from our President's final comment.

"I've had 37 years' experience working with young people who could not have gone to college at Hunter had there been a fee. I am certain that if the Speaker and the Republican members of this panel would look at the records of undergraduates who have struggled, who have yearned for a college education, they would not want to make it more difficult for them. I am proud of the fact that under Mayor Wagner's leadership and the leadership of Dr. Rosenberg of the Board of Higher Education, and following our Alumni Associations' urging there will be no tuition fees in the community colleges in this City, as well as in the senior colleges. Given the great benefit, the remarkable achievements of the Jonas Salks, of the Felix Frankfurters, of the thirty judges or more sent by City College up to this State's Supreme Court, given the remarkable achievements of the graduates of our City colleges, I can only pray that there will be a change of opinion and that the Republican leadership will want to keep upstate colleges tuition-free."

FREE TUITION COMMITTEE

Volunteers for our new Committee on Free Tuition now number 99. This year's campaign to reach all citizens, to urge them to express their views on free tuition, will shortly be under way. If we can persuade very large numbers of voters to express their views, the Republican majority in the State Legislature may be persuaded to allow the bill to restore mandatory free tuition to be debated on merit in the next Legislative session. The bill has been locked in Committee for two years, during the Legislative sessions of '62 and '63, for only a few Republicans have voted with the Democrats to release the bill.

The Alumni Associations of the City Colleges will be working together, again, in this year's campaign to restore free tuition upstate, and to maintain it in the City.

All Alumni will have noted the heartening announcement by Mayor Wagner and Dr. Rosenberg, Chairman of the Board of Higher Education, that beginning in February, 1964, there will be free tuition in the City's three community colleges, as well as in the four senior colleges.