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DISABILITY

Points to Ponder.

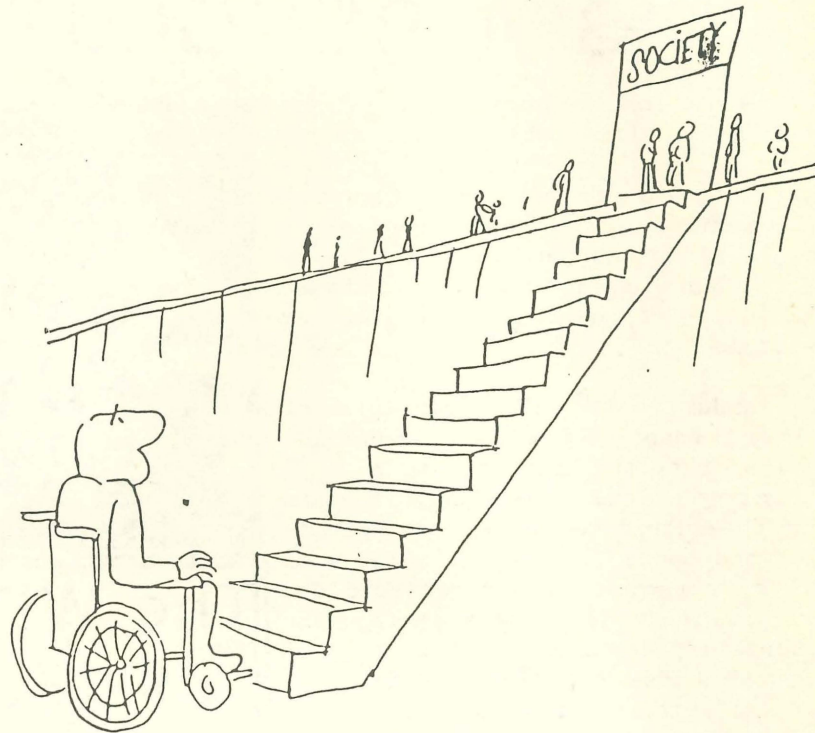
INTRODUCTION

The number of disabled people in this country has grown considerably since the end of the Second World War, due to improvements in medical techniques. Before then most babies would die at an early age, and similarly more accidents would prove fatal.

Most people think of disabled people as being wheelchair bound or blind. This is far from the case. There are a vast range of disabilities, many of which are not immediately noticeable.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE DISABLED?

What it feels like depends to a large extent on the attitudes of other people. Sometimes the response is misguided but well-meaning so that people find themselves patronised or pitied. At other times the reaction can be downright hostile. For example, it is not unknown for disabled people to be turned away from pubs on the grounds that they will offend the other customers. More commonly, people with disabilities find themselves ignored because others do not know how to respond, become embarrassed and take the easy way out.



WHAT CAN WE DO ?

The integration and acceptance of disabled people into society is vital if this ignorance and discrimination is to be defeated. This can be achieved by positive promotion of three basic principles: access, awareness and self advocacy. The concept of self advocacy is vital if disabled people are to retain (or even acquire for the first time) self respect.

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF BEING DISABLED

