

Aid for all disabled is urged

March 30
1973

By Pat Healy
Social Services
Correspondent

A group of prominent experts on disability yesterday urged the Prime Minister to accept that a system of allowances should be introduced for all disabled people, not just severely disabled children and thalidomide victims.

They want the allowances to be based on degree of handicap, rather than reduced earning power, and estimate that the cost would be between £250m and £300m a year.

Professor Peter Townsend, Professor of Sociology at Essex University, said yesterday that the Government's survey of disabled adults had produced much information on the degree of handicap but it had not been acted on in any systematic way. The attendance allowance was a beginning but, like most services for disabled people, was being developed piecemeal.

In a letter to Mr Heath yesterday the 61 signatories said the Government had already acknowledged that public services for handicapped people were unsatisfactory by establishing the £3m fund for severely handicapped children in the wake of the thalidomide dispute.

But £3m, or even £6m, was only a tiny fraction of the sum needed.

"The Government should go on to acknowledge that an equitable system of allowances and pensions must be introduced not just for the thalidomide children and other severely congenitally handicapped children but all handicapped children and adults, irrespective of type of handicap."

There should not be separate systems of allowances for children and adults, because there were already grave difficulties when handicapped children reached school-leaving age. Financial support should be administered by a statutory body and based on degree of handicap, independent of any assessed need for attendance.

The letter asked the Government to acknowledge the need to develop occupational and social services for far more disabled people than those now on local authority registers. Housing, equipment and transport grants should be rapidly expanded, and nursing, home help, laundry and other welfare services doubled or tripled in scale.

"We are aware that the Government is active in many different respects and that there have been a number of encourag-

ing developments in recent years. But the general development needs to be much faster, and better integrated. Above all, government resources for the handicapped in our society should be greatly increased."

Professor Townsend said it was estimated that there were 400,000 handicapped children, but fewer than 400 thalidomide children whose plight had highlighted the difficulties of the others. He believed Britain might be on the threshold of being able to define how a system of allowances could be run, although it might need a government inquiry.

The signatories to the letter fall into three groups: chairmen and directors of voluntary organizations concerned with handicap; professionals in the health field and in universities; and heads of independent research institutions.

Aid centres opening: The first two centres to be established in a £1m network of demonstration rehabilitation services for the disabled will be at the Derby Royal Infirmary and the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. Announcing this yesterday, Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Social Services, said he hoped to announce the next six centres later this year.

There are already special provisions for selected people, often nuns, to distribute Communion in extreme circumstances, but each case had to be approved individually by the Pope and the effect was inevitably limited.

Other cases envisaged in the instructions include the distribution of Communion in hospitals or similar places where one priest is not sufficient, or when the Communion has to be taken long distances to the sick in danger of death.

These "extraordinary ministers", as they are called, may be used whenever there is no priest, deacon or acolyte; when these are prevented from administering Holy Communion because of other pastoral duties or sickness or advanced age; and when the number of communicants is so great that the celebration of Mass or distribution of Communion would be unduly prolonged.

Police open fire in disorders at Lisbon university

From Our Correspondent
Lisbon, March 29

Police opened fire at Lisbon University today when students attending a protest meeting refused to leave the canteen, where they had taken refuge.

The disorders began during a meeting at the faculty of law

the murder of Mr John Cartland last week with the deaths in recent years of other Britons, who served in British intelligence in France during the Second World War.

The French news agency, Agence France-Presse, announced that its Marseilles office had also received an anonymous typewritten communication entitled "Letter to British friends". While repeating the main points made to the BBC, it contained several very confused allegations.

The anonymous writer alleged, for instance, that Mr Cartland's killing was an act of revenge on the part of some French person or persons for his wartime activities in France, but mixed this with assertions involving not only British intelligence, but the Gestapo, the Soviet intelligence services, the Mafia, the French underworld and what was called the "Jewish-Arab antagonism".

There has been no comment from the French police about these anonymous letters, but the news agency speculated today that they came from someone well known to the police, who customarily wrote letters containing wide-ranging but vague allegations.

When asked about these anonymous communications, Mr Jeremy Cartland, the murdered man's son, said today at Marseilles airport, before leaving for London, that he did not believe there existed a cause and effect relation between his father's activities with the

justice system and the investigating magistrate handling the case at Aix-en-Provence. He is expected to see M Delmas again next week.

Mr Christopher Mitchell Heggs, the British barrister Mr Cartland has engaged along with three French counsel in a *partie civile* action, today told me he felt that the French police ought to look into the anonymous communications. He admitted, however, that the allegations might turn out to be only a red herring.

Mr Jeremy Cartland later arrived back in London with his sister, Elizabeth.

He said of the theory that his father's murder may be linked with the French wartime resistance movement: "I'm afraid I know very little about this, just vague rumours. I know that my father was in intelligence in France during the Second World War and there has been talk of secret service, but as far as I'm concerned it was very secret."

"I don't really know if my father kept in contact with any of the people he met while he was in France. There were some people who knew that we would be in France this year, but as we were touring we had no timetable. We visited Spain first and could have stayed there another week for all anyone knew."

He added: "I saw the list of names of people who called with this theory and none of them