



THE ARKLETON TRUST

THE INSTITUTIONAL BASIS OF
RURAL DEVELOPMENT

A Comparative Study of Lozère
in South Central France and
Grampian in North East Scotland

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Ref: 86/1/E

THE ARKLETON TRUST was set up in 1977 to study new approaches to rural development with emphasis on education and training. It aims to improve knowledge and understanding of rural development and rural education issues, and to promote dialogue between policy makers, administrators, academics and field workers at all levels on these issues. Although concerned with Europe and the Third World, the Trust has concentrated on the less favoured areas of Europe. The Trust is guided in its work by an International Advisory Committee.

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PREFACE

Bruce Manson was awarded an HADB Fellowship in Rural Development by the Arkleton Trust in 1983 to enable him to study the institutional structure contributing to the landscape and economy of mountain and upland areas with special reference to the Languedoc-Roussillon. The purpose of the Fellowship is to allow people who are involved at a practical level in rural development and education to carry out further study in areas relevant to economic and social development of the Highlands and Islands, and to evaluate past work. The emphasis is on provision of such opportunities to applicants in mid-career who have demonstrated their ability to make a contribution to rural well-being by their activities in the post which they hold.

When Bruce took up his Fellowship he was in the Planning Department of Grampian Regional Council. He is now employed by the North East Scotland Development Agency, a small but effective development agency originally set up as an Association by the various County Councils in North East Scotland, but incorporated within Grampian Region in 1975. For some time now both NESDA and the Region have been concerned about the problems of its rural hinterland, 'Upland Grampian', and it was partly in this context that considerable support to the Fellowship was given by both Grampian Region and NESDA, since the Lozère, a Département within the region of Languedoc-Roussillon, had been the subject of an Integrated Development Programme sponsored by the EEC at the same time as those for the Western Isles and the Luxembourg region of Belgium.

The report which Bruce has written constitutes an interesting comparative study of two less favoured upland regions, one in France and one in the UK. Since completing the draft report Bruce has given a number of talks on his experience all over Scotland. His study has already had an influence on ideas about local development initiatives in Scotland. The Arkleton Trust would like to accord its thanks to Bruce for preparing the report in a camera ready form and NESDA and Grampian Region for their support during Bruce's Fellowship. Finally, we are indebted to the Highlands and Islands Development Board for their support for this Fellowship.

John Bryden
Programme Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped in the preparation of this report. My particular thanks are due to Michel Kopp of SAFER and to the staff of the Chamber of Agriculture, Yves Prouheze, Alain Raynal, M. Fourcaud and M. Bouniol. Jean-Louis Lyon of the Chambres de Métiers helped me considerably to understand the world of the small businessman in Lozere. For their time and patience I also thank M. Guerin, M. Peyre, M. Sastourné, M. Blanchemain, M. Prouvot, M. Laquerbe, Mlle. Guillen, M. Bonnal and the many officials, farmers and businessmen of Lozère too numerous to mention by name.

Special thanks are also due to my guide and mentor, Paul Brémond, whose wit and wisdom helped to extract me from several awkward situations.

For looking after me in Montpellier thanks are due to Alain Sivadier and his wife. In this country I am grateful to John Bryden for inspiration and to Trevor Sprott for the opportunity to take time out from local government duties, something which I commend to everyone in public service. A final mention must be made of typists Carol Kirkwood and Liz Laing for their accuracy in two languages.

Bruce Manson

I INTRODUCTION

In 1982 the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Communities published a series of recommendations on the future of rural policy in Britain. A brief visit to France had impressed one of the working parties with France's institutional approach to rural and upland problems and they expressed the hope that further investigations could be carried out.

I have set out in this report to try to answer some of the questions raised by the Committee. My method has been to compare and contrast the small upland Département of Lozère in the French Massif Central with Grampian, a Region in which I have worked as Planning Officer and latterly Development Officer for the past nine years. The report is based upon a series of interviews with officials, farmers, businessmen and public figures and attempts to map out on the ground the many government, semi-government, voluntary and representative agencies which contribute to the area's distinctive way of life.

During the course of 1986 European States will begin to bring into effect, each according to its own national priorities, the various elements of the 1985 Structures Regulation. Part of the debate which led up to the current Regulation concerned the role to be played by special regional measures within the overall Structures framework. Six years ago Lozère was one of three areas in Europe chosen to demonstrate the feasibility of an integrated development programme tailored to meet the needs of a particular region and drawing on the three main EEC funds. This experiment provided the study with added interest as a number of the government and semi-government institutions are beginning to work together within the EEC sponsored programme.

Given the different historical backgrounds of Lozère and Grampian it would be rash to speculate on the appropriateness or otherwise of a particular French institution to current problems in upland Grampian without a broader understanding of the underlying social and economic processes which have given rise to the institutions in the first place.

I have therefore been drawn more towards the history and the economic circumstances of Lozère than I had intended, but such perspectives are essential if a distinction is to be made between those institutions unique to France and those which might have wider applicability.

Lozère - the land and the landscape

The French Départements were a Napoleonic creation - an administrative unit superimposed upon the map with little regard to geographical or cultural realities. The size and shape of Lozère in common with most other Départements was determined by the needs of the first Prefect to travel from the centrally located capital (Mende in the case of Lozère) to the boundaries of the administrative unit and to return the same day by horse and trap.

For a small inland Département about two thirds the size of Grampian Region, Lozère encompasses a striking variety of landscape types which only a brief description of the area's relief, climate and geology can explain. To the extreme south-east of the region lie the schist-based Cévennes mountains. Here rises the river Tarn flowing westwards and cutting a deep gorge through the limestone plateaux known as the Causses. In the centre of the region another westward flowing river creates the broader and more fertile valley of the Lot. It rises near Mont Lozère which, although physically part of the Cevennes, differs in its granite structure. The north-eastern corner, known as the Margeride, is also a granite plateau contrasting with the high volcanic basalts of Aubrac to the north-east.

The Cévennes

The Cevenne mountains of one hundred years ago were described vividly by Robert Louis Stevenson: "The schist bedrock combined with sudden autumn deluges causes them to take on a sharply eroded appearance. The northern slopes are thickly covered in pine, oak, holly and beech or by plantations of Austrian pine whereas the slopes facing the Mediterranean have been planted with sweet chestnut."

This landscape has been much altered by man over many thousands of years. Indeed the cutting down of timber for fuel or to create high pastures increased the water run-off from the hills and contributed greatly to erosion and flooding. These problems led to the beginning of the state forestry system in the latter part of the 19th century, as trees were planted in an effort to stabilise badly eroded soil. To the tourist, the most obvious man-made features in the Cévennes are the terraces laboriously constructed since the Middle Ages to retain soil on the mountain slopes for the growing of mulberries, fruit trees and vegetables

(vines and olives on the lower slopes). These are now mostly abandoned although older country people often retain corners for vegetable patches or even for the grazing of small herds of sheep and goats.

The geology of the Cévennes is most evident in the traditional houses and barns which are constructed of dark brown blocks of flaky schist with door and window lintels of carved granite and roofs of thick grey slate chipped into rounded scallops and surmounted by massive stone chimneys.

Mont Lozère and the Margeride

This area has many similarities to the eastern foothills of the Grampians. Its geological base of granite has been gently rounded by glacial action or by glacial melt waters with the occasional chaotic deposit of granite blocks or finer morainic materials. The smaller river valleys have a landform and vegetation strikingly similar to many in Grampian and only a trained botanist could distinguish the subtle variations in species well known in North East Scotland.

The barren central ridge of the Margeride slopes gently to the east and west onto flat heather moors and peat bogs. Over many hundreds of years these have been cleared of Scots pine and beech and transformed into rough pasture for cattle or replanted with larch and spruce. Drainage has always been a problem to the farmer and peat bogs are not uncommon on the higher land with sphagnum moss, bog cotton and venus fly-trap.

The traditional crops of rye and oats have more recently given way to barley but, unlike his Grampian equivalent, the Margeride farmer has used this almost exclusively for fodder rather than as a cash crop. The small farmsteads are all built of granite but the numbers of modern outbuildings is evidence of the go-ahead nature of many of the area's younger farmers.

Aubrac

This high volcanic area has much more in common with Auvergne to the north-west than to the rest of Lozère. It is also cattle rearing country but even more barren and inhospitable than the Margeride. The first snows can fall in October and often last well into the Spring.

The landscape is bleak open moorland long cleared of tree cover and farmers are forced to build massive semi-circular cattle shelters of boulders. Often the only other features on the horizon are the scattered abandoned farmsteads known as 'burons'. These ruins, constructed out of granite and burnt chocolate coloured basalt, were once the summer quarters of teams of cheesemakers who kept their cattle on the plateau until the first snows of autumn. Cattle rearing is now mostly for beef and is carried out on a semi-ranching basis.

The valley of the Lot

This is the most fertile strip of the Département to the east and west of the main town of Mende. A variety of fruit and vegetables is grown in the alluvial soil mainly for local consumption. Dairy farming is common with the surplus milk being exported in the form of powder to make cheese. The slopes around Mende are covered with pine forests planted by the municipality in the late 19th century to prevent soil erosion and replanted since the war by the National Forest Authority.

The Causses

The southern slopes of the valley shelve steeply upwards onto high calcareous plateaux. These are dissected by steep gorges and occasionally pierced by volcanic intrusions producing stretches of basalt and lava. Not only is the rainfall lower because of the absence of relief but what rain does fall is rapidly absorbed by the permeable limestones. This causes an elaborate underground system of caves and subterranean lakes.

The landscape above ground is usually flat but occasionally there are clusters of limestone pillars which are the result of rapid water erosion or depressions where underground caves have collapsed. These can sometimes contain water for some time and are often near the site of a small settlement of sheep farmers.

Most of the oak and Scots pine was removed in Roman times although there has been some replanting recently. The houses turn their backs to the prevailing wind. The lack of timber or granite for construction has led to a characteristic architectural feature - vaults

of rough limestone blocks. Roofs are constructed of limestone slabs.

This has long been a sheep rearing area but has declined steadily over the past generation and is now relatively sparsely populated. Water conservation is a major problem in contrast to the surrounding sub-regions.

The Causses are cut in two by the spectacular canyons of the river Tarn with their carved rock pools and natural arches are important to the Departement's tourist industry and kayaks and canoes now pass along routes which were first used by prehistoric man.

Lozère is by no means typical of rural or even upland France, but then every part of the French mountains has its own character, its own history and its peculiar problems. Lozère's problems stem from physical isolation, difficult internal communications and a relatively short growing season. It was late to be drawn into France's market economy and the peasant subsistence way of life persisted well into this century. The communal agro-pastoral system adapted to modern market conditions only with great difficulty. The State has long intervened in the area to transform what it saw as a backward unproductive farming system into one based upon private ownership and the pursuit of surplus for outside markets. The peasant on the other hand has fought a protracted rear-guard action right up to the present time but the steady drop in population from the 1880's onwards is witness to the fact that the battle was never capable of being won. The legacy of the struggle is a complicated and fragmented land tenure system which present day authorities see as a major obstacle to economic progress. Chapter II examines the decline of the old agro-pastoral system and the early involvement of the State in its downfall. It tries to explain the origin of the peculiar land ownership problems which have forced French authorities to put structural reform to the fore in national and EEC legislation.

Chapter III looks at the development of French farm policy since the War and its effect upon Lozère. The central nature of the farm policy of the 1960's to the mountain policy of the 1970's is emphasised and some contrasts with the situation in upland Scotland are made.

The fourth chapter on forestry asks whether the exploitation of this particular product, abundant in Lozère, can be considered part of a mountain policy which aims to develop an area's natural resources to

the benefit of the local economy. The importance of farm forestry in Lozère is examined more closely.

There are as many small businesses in Lozère as farms and Chapter V looks at how these have been treated within the context of France's developing mountain policy. It asks whether the drive to create jobs in the upland areas has overlooked the real nature of the problem and misunderstood the scale and type of small business which keeps the upland economy together.

Chapter VI looks at tourism, not as an independent sector but as a means of diversifying the farm income. It is concerned with whether France's long standing farm tourism policies have brought about a real alternative source of income for the farmer which can be built up in a time of increasing food surpluses.

The Integrated Development Programme is a recent development in Lozère and Chapter VII draws no conclusions about its success or otherwise but concentrates on its scope, its objectives and some early indications of progress.

Finally, Chapter VIII assesses what conclusion can be drawn which would be relevant to future policy in upland Scotland. Is the nature of the problem in Lozère and the structure of the institutions designed to tackle it so different as to make all relevant comparisons meaningless or are there pointers to adaptations or innovations which we can make as policy makers based upon both the failures and the successes of the French experiments?

II THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF STATE INVOLVEMENT IN LOZERE UP TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR - TOWARDS A MOUNTAIN POLICY

The day to day administration of Lozère's EEC sponsored Integrated Development Programme is carried out by a senior official of the local branch of SAFER[1], the Land Assembly Agency. The Agency's main task is to purchase, either on the open market or more rarely by pre-emption, parcels of land which it consolidates into viable working units. It is a long and difficult task requiring much patience, diplomacy and an understanding of the complexities of the local land tenure systems. The local SAFER man must envy the powers possessed by the 19th century improving laird in North East Scotland. SAFER's task is complicated by the sheer number of tiny individual properties in Lozère (38,000 agricultural properties and only 5,300 farmers) - by local attitudes towards common land some of which was partitioned at the turn of the century and is now abandoned by 90% of its former owners - and by the spread of forestry into common land where a zone of transition between uplands and lowlands often had an ambiguous juridical status. In addition, the land market which does exist is very tight. Young small-scale farmers spurred on by a range of grants and low interest loans are struggling to expand their acreage whilst older men often unmarried and without heirs are content to farm in the traditional manner until they are forced to rent the land which they cannot work. Even then they tend to cling onto control over their plots by entering into year by year grazing leases which do not encourage investment in land improvement.

The outsider, particularly someone used to the tenanted farm structure of Upland Grampian finds it difficult to understand the relationships between the French administration and the upland French "paysan" or "exploitant". The contrast is usually dismissed as one of French "backwardness" but this only begs the question rather than answers it. The reality is much more complex and it varies markedly from one area to the next. The following brief account of farm development and state involvement relates to the Margeride chosen because of its soil and climatic affinities with the upland parts of Grampian Region. A different story could be told about the terraced cultivation, chestnut plantations and goat rearing

[1] Societe d'Aménagement Foncier et d'Etablissement Rural

of the Cévennes or the dry calcareous sheep rearing plateaux of the Causses, both a mere half hour's drive by modern mountain roads from the Margeride.

The historical perspective taken in this chapter is designed to do two things:- i) to explain the reasons for the development of the present day pattern of agriculture (and hence the problems faced by modern day administrators), and ii) to trace the developing involvement of the State in the agricultural and forestry systems - involvements which were to sow the seeds of the later mountain policy developed since the War.

Comparisons are made in the text with the North East of Scotland but the section does not pretend to present a full comparison between the regions. Rather, the more familiar history of the development of upland Grampian is used as a measuring stick to gauge the progress of agrarian change in Margeride as a prelude to a more detailed modern day comparison. (3.3)

The section ends after the Second World War or, more precisely, on the eve of the first Five Year Plan in 1946. National forestry policy and local agricultural policy adapted to mountain conditions had been developed by that date, but the idea of a specifically mountain policy with a social and economic content had yet to be born.

2.1 Early patterns of cultivation

The National Park Authority whose area encompasses the southern part of Margeride has carried out much research into the landscape before and immediately after the coming of Man. After the last Ice Age, the first soils on the granite ridge of the Margeride were host to heather moorlands. Further down the hill there were beech forests with birch, willow and alder on the wetter lands. Gradually, Scots pine introduced itself, first occupying the wet areas where the beech was not yet established and later coming to occupy much of the beech's ecological niche as successive waves of human occupants burnt or cleared the land. The landscape was never stable. On the high ground whin and heather advanced in times of under pasturing and then retreated "under the teeth of the sheep". Below 3,800 ft. the beech disappeared almost totally under cultivated land and when these lands went into decline during a temporary drop in population it was the Scots pine along with scrub vegetation which reinvaded.

By the Middle Ages an agricultural system based upon sheep and rye growing had become established which produced many of the landscapes characteristic of the area today but which are rapidly disappearing with the growth of cattle rearing and extensive forestry.

The basis of the system was the common herd of sheep which was led up to graze the high pastures during the day and brought down to the paddocks around the villages at night. This process involved a transfer of nutrients in the form of manure from the high pasture to the lands used for cereal growing. The sheep were either local or transhumant and the night time paddocking was governed by a complicated set of rules and regulations which ensured that everyone obtained manure proportional to his ownership of sheep. The system, employing a village shepherd, is now rapidly dying out.

There was an intermediate area between the village paddocks and the higher pasture where two forms of temporary cultivation were employed. "La buge" involved allowing broom to grow after the last ploughing. The land would be used for grazing for a few years then left alone for 10-15 years until the pine began to invade. It would then be burned back. The land temporarily enriched by the nitrogen from the roots of the broom and the minerals from the ash would then be cultivated with rye for 2-3 years until it was totally exhausted and the process would begin again.

An alternative method involved the direct sowing of pine seeds after the last ploughing. The trees would grow rapidly and thickly in the disturbed soil and the first cutting would begin for fuel after 10-15 years. Small clearings would be made, grass would be encouraged and the forest would be opened out to the grazing herd. After 30-50 years the remaining trees would be cut, the scrub would be burned and rye would be planted between the stumps until the land was once more exhausted.

Here then is the first contrast with North East Scotland where early cultivation appears to have been confined to the lower and more easily worked ground with infield outfield meadowland and rough grazing on the larger holdings and where teams of oxen ploughed the land into the characteristic S-shaped pattern of undulating ridges and furrows. In Lozère all land right up to the hilltops was part of the agro-pastoral system.

The land ownership pattern was also different. In the later Middle Ages the land in North East Scotland was ultimately owned by a laird, however poor himself, and sublet to tenants who might themselves sublet. It was a form of serfdom in all but name. In Lozère the breakdown of serfdom led to what has been called a "cabbage patch peasantry" where all the villagers owned their own piece of land and grazed their sheep on land which had once belonged to the "seigneur" but which gradually came under the common ownership of the village as the feudal system waned. The "seigneurs" only held onto the high land where a regular summer rental could be obtained from the lowland sheep owners of the neighbouring Département who still practised transhumance. The land was inherited by the eldest son and younger sons had to emigrate or break in new land.

The village and the commune developed early as a focus of social and political activity where the common property could be managed, disputes between large and small peasants would be resolved and where the collective voice of the peasantry could be heard in defence of their interests against the local aristocracy which in the 18th century was trying to win back many of the rights which it had been forced to concede. Such a focus never developed in upland Grampian where the pre-improvement settlement pattern consisted of "fermtouns", each of about half a dozen houses (tenants, sub-tenants and cotters) scattered over the laird's estate to whom they all still owed allegiance economically if no longer judicially. It was a pattern which had been superseded in Lozère in the 15th century but which was in many ways better adapted to transform itself to meet the exigencies of market economy.

On the eve of the French Revolution in 1789, the first improving lairds such as Grant of Monymusk had already begun the long process of improvement, enclosure and capital investment which within 100 years was to produce some of the most productive farms in the country from the most unpromising of landscapes. The lairds had the power, the authority and the access to capital to bring about major changes. They even imported model tenant farmers from the south to point the way to their reluctant tenantry. In North East Scotland, common property had virtually disappeared by 1830, although squatter settlement on what was widely considered to be "no man's land" continued on the slopes of Bennachie.

In Lozère the period leading up to the Revolution had seen population growth, famine and hardship. The Revolution itself had little impact on the lot of the peasant. Laws were enacted in 1793 designed to encourage the partition of the common lands but the peasants were reluctant to change their old ways. Neither was there any stimulus for them to do so. The laws abolishing the right of primogeniture had less effect in Lozère than in other parts of France where land was progressively sub-divided between sons throughout the 19th century, but some sub-division did take place.

There were sporadic "outbreaks of liberty" where peasants began to burn and clear the old royal and ecclesiastical forests and the backlash which this caused was to have a profound effect on the relations between the peasant and the State for the next century as the forestry administration grew in importance.

2.2 The transition between peasant farming and market oriented farming in the 19th century

In both Grampian and Lozère the poorest peasant during the 18th century had had to supplement his income by means of handicrafts and by labouring for his richer neighbour. In both cases, the trade was later eroded by cheaper mass produced items originating in the cities, so breaking a potential link between the rural peasant and the outside market economy. The North East peasant, however, got his first chance to produce for that market in the early part of the 19th century. It was the rapid growth of Aberdeen, and ironically the Napoleonic Wars, which increased the demand for meat giving the peasant a lever to produce the necessary surplus to reinvest and raise himself above the level of subsistence. Internal communications in Grampian improved and, by the late 1820's it was even possible to export cattle by steamship to London. With the coming of the railway in 1840, this trade was stimulated along with a reciprocal trade in manure, grain and machinery.

Margeride, by contrast, was more remote from the sea and the railway did not arrive until the 1870's. The collapse of the wool trade robbed the peasant of his only merchantable product. He either emigrated or returned to subsistence farming with a lower standard of living.

Many parts of lowland Scotland saw the virtual disappearance of the peasant in the early part of the 19th century as he was replaced by hired labour. In Grampian, however, subsistence farmers clung on until the first World War supplying rent to the laird and labour and store cattle to the large farmer. Individual peasants also acted as pioneers for the laird by breaking in marginal moorland under 19-year improving leases. This would often later be let at market rental for capitalist farmers with the peasant moving on to another improving lease.

The cultivation of marginal land in Lozère was a time-honoured occupation practised by the peasant whenever population pressures warranted. This was the case from 1820 to 1850. The peasant had the right to break in and cultivate whatever land he wished on the common pasture and increasing numbers availed themselves of this right from 1820 onwards. Without any access to the national market (unlike their Grampian equivalents) this was the only way they could survive in a time of growing population. Similar behaviour by the North East peasantry on the slopes of Bennachie was brought to an end by the lairds in 1859. The greater power of the Scottish lairds ensured that it did not reappear.

Fears which had been kindled when the first Royal forests were penetrated in the 1790's were relit when, in the 1820's, the Lozère peasants once again began to move up the hillside into the peripheral zone of broom and scattered pine. What the national forest administration failed to understand was that the peasants were, in fact, reclaiming common land which had become overgrown during a lull in population growth. For them the common land was both a source of manure for their cereal fields (via the common herd) and an area to cultivate as a safety valve in time of shortage or population growth. The Forest Authority in Lozère was therefore looked upon in much the same way by the peasantry as the North East laird.

From the first Forestry Code in 1827 there was a struggle between the peasant and the State. The 1827 law was designed to protect the national forest heritage but the early foresters failed to observe that common land with a scattering of trees was an essential part of the village agro-pastoral system. Successive attempts were made throughout the 19th century to bring these common lands under forestry control but the State was always beaten off by the stubborn resistance of the peasant.

Struggles by the peasant against authority took a number of forms. The main actors in the unfolding drama were the Forest Authority, the Prefect who represented the State, the General Council which was the elected Departmental body and the SAISAL[1] which represented the improving forces in the Departement (there were also, of course, many more local struggles going on between large and small landowners at the village or commune level to which universal suffrage had been extended early in the 19th century). The stage was usually the communal land, an anachronism in what was developing as a property-owning market economy but essential to the old form of sheep and cereal cultivation as long as it survived.

The early ham-fisted attempts by the forest authorities spurred on by the Prefect to take over the communal lands were rejected by rich and poor alike and the authority was forced to give back many of their acquisitions in the face of opposition from the General Council. The 1848 Revolution temporarily reduced the power of the local "notables" and the forest authority once more took the offensive before a series of so-called Mixed Commissions were set up to arbitrate over land acquisitions.

Under the Second Empire (1852-1870) there was more of an attempt to appease the peasants. The Emperor held the forest authorities at bay (despite his need for timber) and began to encourage the splitting up of common land to produce consolidated agricultural holdings but his success in Margeride was limited. Foresters came to recognise the complex needs of the pastoral system and turned their attention to planting trees to prevent soil erosion on the steeper slopes. On the planted communal lands systems of mixed cereal growing and forestry were worked out to the mutual benefit of peasants and foresters. Indeed, it was found that the pines benefited from grazing. The grazing of sheep on the plateau was tolerated.

It was only the breakdown of the sheep and cereal growing system in the face of cattle breeding towards the latter part of the 19th century which enabled the forest authorities to make any headway. This period also saw the gradual splitting up of parts of the common land, a practice long advocated by the local improvers. This was the real equivalent of the Scottish enclosures, but the process was never completed. The portions were often let by the Commune on an 18-year lease

[1] Society of Agriculture, Industry and Arts of Lozère

enabling cattle to be reared on a large scale for the first time. This also tended to break the link between the grazing of the common herd and the growing of cereals which were in any case after 1870 undercut by grain imported via the railway. The upland pastures began to fall into disuse.

Because the land portions were owned by the village or the Commune, richer farmers had to combine political and economic activity if they wished to amass a large holding, first to achieve the subdivision and then to obtain a number of portions in addition to their own. They used their spare time to secure office in the municipal council and from there set out to enlarge their domains by every means at their disposal, fair or foul. The poor frequently had recourse to the Prefect to right the many wrongs and injustices surrounding the allocation of the land parcels. He was always a remote individual, aloof from parish pump politics, the representative of the Republic and the upholder of the law. He was also often the natural enemy of the local "notables", many of them the royalist rump of the old aristocracy although with a growing proportion of capitalist farmers. He was eager to see the demise of the old agro-pastoral system but wished the transition to a property owning democracy to come about in an ordered and lawful way.

Towards the end of the century, the demise of the common herd was further hastened by the drop in wool prices caused by foreign importation. The poor peasant often deprived of sufficient manure from the common pasture was forced to let his land to the richer peasants. The rich landowners, the bourgeois inheritors of the old "seigneurs", began to develop a trade in sheep fattening as the transhumance system began to break down. The area began a slow adaptation to the market economy and, as had been the case in North East Scotland during the 1820's, the main trade of the peasant was in cattle. This late start, combined with the often successful struggle of the peasants to maintain their common lands, meant that the peasant class continued as a powerful force in the local Margeride economy well into the 20th century, whereas its Grampian counterpart was all but extinguished by the eve of the First World War. The rental system in Grampian and the power of the lairds had eased the transition from a peasant to a market economy although even here the spirit of self-preservation displayed by the peasant was remarkable.[1]

[1] North East Lowlands of Scotland. J R Allen. 1952

The years between the Wars saw at best a marking of time in the North East of Scotland. The poverty and the hardship of farming at this time is well described by J R Allen, but he is not describing a peasant poverty brought on by natural disaster but the difficult times of small businessmen brought about by adverse market conditions. The overseas competition and later the Depression of the thirties held down prices but they also kept inputs at a tolerable level and allowed the farmer to continue in business albeit at a subsistence level. Cattle were either reared on the higher land or fattened in the lowlands often being imported from Canada and Ireland. Oats were sold to pay the rent and butter and eggs to buy household goods. Wages of employees were reduced.

The French Farming system on the other hand was protected during these years by the tariff walls imposed by the 1892 Reforms. In the uplands this served for a time to preserve the structure of the old peasant society and prevent much further development of the market economy but it did not prevent further depopulation. The interwar period in Margeride saw the gradual decline of the old agro-pastoral system but this did not release sufficient land to enable the further growth of large scale market-oriented farming even if the capital and the labour had been available. The population declined but the land structure remained largely unaltered.

Vacant lots on the Commune were always auctioned off to the highest bidder. After the First World War, the vacancy rate increased dramatically and the rental fell but many were never let and reverted to scrub. Some were used by the larger landowners for low intensity grazing without any attempt at proper maintenance. The forest authority now met with little resistance when it bid to take over the communal lands. It was only restrained by the lack of finance.

What is now known as the traditional "paysan" of Margeride seems, in fact, to be a product of the first half of the 20th century. As the agro-pastoral system declined, the common lands receded and the price of cereals was under cut and there developed a small scale individualist loosely linked to the outside market by the production of young store cattle which he fed on home grown grain. Except in farms close to towns where there was a demand for milk, calves born at the end of the winter would be reared for three or four months. They would then be sold in the local market and any surplus milk converted into cheese or used on the farm. On higher ground where

common land still existed, larger farmers would still keep a few sheep in addition to their cattle but now they actually paid the village shepherd to take them up to the pastures in spring or the heather moors in summer. There were by 1946 in Margeride few adherents to the old system of agro-pastoralism in its purest form but its legacy remained in the landowning pattern and perhaps also in the attitude of the "paysan" - an attitude which resisted change and was suspicious of state intervention.

Conclusion

By 1946 Margeride was still a curious hybrid lying somewhere between the old peasant society based upon an adapted agro-pastoral system (the village shepherd, the rye and the common lands) and a small scale semi-subsistence mixed farming system which was based on calf rearing with some cereals grown only for fodder. The common lands were either under-utilised or planted by the forest authorities.

The transition to a market economy had been long and difficult, hampered by poor communications, protectionism but most of all by the success of the traditional peasant in fighting off attempts by the State and the large landowners to destroy the old pattern of husbandry combining private plots and common land. The fact that the area was cut off from outside markets until the latter part of the 19th century helped the peasant in his struggle but gradually cheaper grain and the splitting up of the common land induced more and more peasants to copy the large owners and turn to the production of cattle for the outside market.

The semi-subsistence mixed farming system which these smallholders developed in the difficult years during the first half of the century is what the modern Lozère agriculturalists refer to as traditional peasant agriculture.

III AGRICULTURE AS THE PIVOT OF FRENCH MOUNTAIN POLICY SINCE THE WAR - THE IMPACT IN LOZERE

Introduction

In 1982 a major report was published by a Parliamentary Commission of Enquiry under the direction of Louis Besson, a Member of Parliament for the mountain area of Savoie in the Alps. The Report called for a relaunching of what had come to be known during the 1960's as "mountain policy". Two hundred proposals were set out designed to breathe new life into the various scattered elements of a policy which had its origins in the Pisani agricultural reforms of 1960 but which had been added to and embellished under the Governments of Pompidou and Giscard. Mountain policy was relaunched in 1983 as an important part of the 9th National Plan.

The following three chapters set out to examine some of the post War mountain policy reforms and their effect on Lozère. This chapter confines itself to agriculture and agricultural reform central to any rural or upland policy but so often overlooked in this country. There is always bound to be a gap between the elegant well-turned phrases of the official documentation and the reality on the ground and whilst Section 3.1 sets the scene by charting the official stages of French agricultural reform within the context of an overall mountain policy, Sections 3.2 and 3.3 return to Lozère and try to assess the impact which the measures have had - first on the institutional structure of the farming economy and then on the changing pattern of Lozère agriculture itself since the War. Most of the material is based upon discussions with local farmers and administrators. Section 3.4 attempts a brief comparison between present day agriculture in Lozère and Grampian with the aid of published statistics.

3.1 Policy background

France had always been a food producing nation and by 1946 despite emigration from the rural and particularly the upland areas, thirty per cent of the population still owed its livelihood directly to the land. It was a political force which could not be ignored in the First Plan after the War and the Fourth Republic poured investment into the mechanisation and modernisation of a largely moribund farming industry. In France as in the United Kingdom much progress was

made but there were forces[1] in France which resented the fact that these measures mainly benefited the bigger farms. Moreover, these were progressive rather than conservative forces.

In the fifties, leaders with new ideas rose from the "Young Catholic Farmers' Movement" (JAC) to join the ranks of the main national Young Farmers' Organisation (CNJA). Later they established links with the young technocrats in the new Gaullist Government and helped draft a number of reforms which were hurriedly implemented after the Brittany riots of the early sixties. The Pisani reforms had a number of objectives. Those concerning structural reform and those concerning economic organisation were paramount. Structural measures included a new pension fund to persuade older farmers to retire, the institution of the SAFERs to buy up and redistribute land and stricter rules against absentee landlords. Later in the sixties these were augmented by the "Indemnité Viagère de Départ" (IVD), a bounty given to farmers who chose to retire early and the "Dotation aux Jeunes Agriculteurs" (DJA), a corresponding grant to help young farmers with the necessary qualifications to set up for the first time. The grant was paid at a higher rate in mountain areas.

The lack of power by producers in local markets was one of the main sources of discontent behind the Brittany riots. Pisani's reforms encouraged Cooperatives and Associations to set up, eg, the "Société d'Intérêt Collectif Agricole" (SICA Montagne).

Later in the sixties there were further enactments designed to improve the genetic structure of the cattle herd and measures to stabilise prices in the meat markets, all of which had, of course, more impact in Lozère than the earlier market reforms relating to cereals and vegetables.

It was this innovative French thinking of the sixties which lay behind the three EEC Structural Directives of 1972 concerned with development plans for farm modernisation, (Dir. 72/159), the cessation of farming and the reallocation of land (72/160) and training for farmers (72/161). Whilst British Civil Servants after the UK's entry to the EEC were forced to adapt existing measures to fit in with the first of these Directives (the other two were never fully adopted in the UK), the French administration merely continued

[1] J Ardagh. 'France in the 1980's

to develop their existing policy and pocketed the 25% EEC subsidy.

The UK had more influence over the 1975 Less Favoured Areas Directive (Dir. 75/268) and was able to consolidate and extend the old Winter Keep Scheme and various pre-CAP grants and subsidies. The French, however, had been testing out some of the rural development ideas since the mid sixties. The idea of a mountain zone within which special concessions would be made available was part of the Pisani reforms but it wasn't until the Rural Development Plans (PARs)[1] were introduced in 1967 that the Central Administration began to link agricultural development with rural development in general. This linking also took place at the highest level with the setting up in 1968 of Interministerial Committees (CIAT)[2] designed to channel aid to the different sectors of the economy. By 1970 a Rural Renovation Fund had been set up but it was only when the farmers' organisations themselves recognised the need to transfer resources from the majority in the lowlands to the minority in the uplands that real progress was made.

A historic Assembly of professional farming organisations took place in Clermont Ferrant in October 1972 where farming leaders declared their solidarity with their mountain representatives in front of the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Agriculture. Shortly after, the "ISM" was inaugurated, the Special Mountain Indemnity. This headage subsidy cuts across all the free trade principles of the Common Market but it has since become the indispensable support for upland farming throughout Europe after its incorporation into the Less Favoured Areas Directive three years later. special laws on pasture development and additional mountain aid for machinery followed soon after in 1973.

By now DATAR, the national planning body set up in 1963 had found a role to play in developing the mountains. It is certainly no coincidence that Pompidou and Chirac both had their political roots in the Massif Central. The Mountain Zone was redefined and in 1975, DATAR launched the First Plan for the Massif Central to be coordinated by a specially appointed "Commissaire". The device known as the "contrat de pays" was launched, designed to channel funds to rural communes which got together to plan development.

[1] PAR - Plan d'Aménagement Rural

[2] CIAT - Comité Interministeriel d'Aménagement du Territoire

Giscard D'Estaing's Vallouise speech in 1977 and the subsequent Directive on the Protection and Development of the Mountains was rather more concerned with protection than with development although it did put agriculture to the fore by attempting to ensure that the best land was reserved for agricultural use in the Plans for Land Occupation (POS) and the Environmentally Protected Zones (ZEP).

By 1979 the idea of an integrated rural planning process was firmly established in the policies of the central planners and a multi-purpose rural development fund known as FIDAR[1] was set up under the direction of the Interministerial Committee. It was designed to pull together the old Rural Renovation Fund, the contrats de pays and the Rural Action Fund and to channel them into so-called fragile areas within the framework of long term plans developed by DATAR (eg, the greater South West Plan or the Plan for the Massif Central) and the local Rural Development Plans (PARs) which by now were beginning to become more widely adopted. FIDAR is considered more fully in Chapter V.

The last years of the Giscard Government saw a consolidation and extension of the earlier measures with an emphasis upon additional help for young farmers, measures to make the renting of land easier and a strengthening of the SAFERs. As far as uplands policy is concerned, the early years of the Mitterand Government were evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Apart from setting up the Besson Commission the new Government substantially increased the level of aid to young farmers and has attempted in the face of British opposition to recoup some of the costs through the revised EEC Structures Directive.

The new Government inherited one initiative, the Integrated Development Programme for Lozère which was intended to pull together three European Funds and a variety of national aid sources in an effort to concentrate development initiatives on one particular area taking account of its particular characteristics and needs. As will be seen in a later chapter, the agricultural component of this experiment has proved to be a greater success than the other elements, not least because of the head of steam built up in that policy area since the Pisani reforms.

[1] Fond Interministerial de Développement et d'Aménagement Rural

3.2 The institutional structure of farm development in Lozère

For the recently arrived visitor all these measures begin to have some impact when he first opens a local telephone directory (a slim document in Lozère's case despite the fact that a telephone can be obtained more quickly here than anywhere else in France). Lozère has only 74,300 inhabitants and Mende, the capital of the Département, a mere 11,000, and yet there are no fewer than fifteen public or publicly financed agencies dealing with some aspect of agriculture.

The largest in terms of employees is the Direction Départementale de l'Agriculture (DDA), the local branch of the Ministry of Agriculture. The scope of this organisation is far wider than the local DAFS office in this country. It has tended to fill some of the gaps created by a weak local and regional government structure in the past. It also reflects the higher priority placed on rural development by the French Ministry of Agriculture. Apart from administration and finance the Director is in charge of four separate departments.

The statistical department is more comprehensive than its UK equivalent and using disaggregated returns from the Agricultural Census can supply the other departments with a diverse range of information from the educational levels of farmers to the current number of tractors in each commune.

The second department is concerned with rural infrastructure and covers a wide range of activities from drainage and rubbish collection to electrification and rural television.

Thirdly, the department most directly concerned with agriculture, the production department, has recently taken on the additional task of supervising submitted dossiers relating to the Integrated Development Programme. Normally it is concerned with straightforward farming grants and Farm Development Plan investments.

Fourthly and finally, the department of Rural Planning, Forestry and Tourism of the DDA has much in common with a General Purpose Regional Planning Authority in Scotland except that agriculture is central to its rural planning rather than peripheral as in this country. It was responsible, along with the local SAFER, for producing the only Rural Development Plan (PAR)

produced in Lozere during the 1970's and is now concerned with a range of rural development matters including the education of young farmers and their wives in activities such as tourism, designed to supplement their farm income.

The 1977 PAR was a classic of its kind, produced 10 years after the enacting legislation and employing all the techniques which developed over that time period. The Prefect decreed that a plan should be prepared in 1972. It was to fit into the framework already set out in the structure plan [1] for the peripheral zone of the National Park and by the time of its publication it was also making references to the Regional Plan for the Massif Central. It was a coordinating document pulling together all the existing programmes (the SICA[2] "gîte" programme, the pastoral programmes, the land use plans, etc.) whilst at the same time marshalling all the considerable array of Government aids which were now on offer and suggesting their most appropriate application within the area, eg, grants for mountain craftsmen, the agricultural processing grant (POA)[3] and the newly created Special Rural Aid set up to encourage all small rural industries in the industrial or tertiary sectors.

In comparing this document to a Scottish Local Plan of the same period it is interesting to note the amount of space given over to agricultural development programmes - pasture improvement and cattle specialisation on the granite of Mont Lozere - land reassembly and intensification of goat breeding in the Cevennes - marketing of sheep meat from the limestone Causses and so on. But it must be recalled that there was no reorganisation of Local Government in France in the mid seventies and these plans were being carried out by teams of civil servants, most drawn from the Ministry of Agriculture but all with a land use planning training. Their job was to pull together and "animate" the dozens of small villages and communes with the aid of Government grants and subsidies. They were, in effect, seconded by the local Prefect for this task.

The pattern of local government is now being transformed, the most visible sign in Mende being the fact that the Prefect's administration has moved out of their former prestigious premises in the main Square

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- [1] Schema Directeur d'Aménagement
 - [2] Societe d'Intérêt Collectif Agricole
 - [3] Prime d'Orientation Agricole (known as FEOGA in UK)

to a secluded annexe in another part of the town. The building has been taken over by the administration of the new elected Departmental Authority but the previous pattern of plan preparation continues with the same individuals in the DDA and the SAFER seconded for day-to-day planmaking and implementation this time by the Departmental Administration.

Next door to the DDA is one of the "établissements publics", the ADASEA or Departmental Association of Farm Development and Restructuring. This organisation is Government funded but run by a committee which includes some of the farmers' representative bodies. It is concerned with all aspects of farm restructuring within the framework of the three 1972 EEC Structures Directives. This includes the task of encouraging older people to give up farming and at the same time helps with the installation and training of new farmers. For those relatively dynamic farmers who wish to expand, ADASEA is responsible for ensuring that their income is compatible with other comparable occupations. This is achieved as in the UK by means of five or six year Farm Development Plans entitling the farmer to higher rates of capital grant in exchange for an undertaking to adhere to a particular improvement programme. The number of farms large enough to participate fully in this scheme has always been small in Lozère and this is one of the reasons for the institution of "mini-development plans" within the IDP framework.

Other "établissements publics" in the vicinity include the National Interprofessional Cereals Office (ONIC) and the National Interprofessional Office of Cattle and Meat (ONIBEV). Both are concerned with intervention buying and the regulation of standards.

On the other side of town two very different types of organisation share a building. The role of the SAFER in piecing together the fragmented land holdings has already been referred to. The SAFERs are Government financed and have certain rights of preemption in the land market. This body is central to the preparation of the IDP and the day-to-day work is run in tandem with the Chamber of Agriculture.

The Chamber has no real equivalent in the UK. Its role is both representative and technical and takes on at one and the same time the characteristics of the Scottish National Farmers Union and the Farm Advisory Service. It is run by an elected committee representing the more influential farming unions and

is financed partly by direct Government grant, partly by a special tax on agricultural produce, and partly by a land or property tax, some of which is also claimed by the Département and the Commune. It plays an important part in implementing the objectives of the IDP through its thirty technicians most of whom are stationed throughout the countryside to follow up and advise farmers who are either participating in a standard Development Plan or in one of the "mini-development plans". Their workload has increased since the IDP was instituted and a few are funded directly by the IDP itself. Their role in the early propaganda work was essential and they appear to be greatly trusted by the local farming community despite the age gap between them and some of the older farmers. The Chamber also has a range of everyday technical functions including genetic improvement of cattle.

The National Park Authority in the nearby town of Florac also has an agricultural function aside from its scientific and environmentally protective roles. There are 500 people and 120 farms in the Park's central zone and the preservation and development of that culture is as much part of the Park's responsibility as the protection of the beaver or the capercaillie.

A peripheral zone around the Park is well populated and a range of special measures exist designed to reconcile farming and conservation objectives. There are constraining measures such as a ban on hunting on certain days of the week but also a special level of grant and subsidy for tourist-related projects or conservation measures.

The Park is run as an "établissement public" and its administrative council is composed of local figures, elected representatives and civil servants.

Land assembled by the SAFER is bought by the Park and rented on a long lease to interested farmers. The clauses of the leasing contract ensure that environmental and conservation aims are met (in the same way that old Scottish Improvement Leases ensured regular rotation, land clearance and drainage). In this way, the land is kept in good heart, sometimes by a group of farmers with the regular application of fertilizer but over or undergrazing is prevented. Direct aid is given towards land reclamation, pasture improvement and the repair and construction of irrigation channels, stone walls, etc. Income is supplemented in summer

by the lodging and feeding of hillwalkers (cross-country skiers in winter). Farm holiday homes qualify for an 80% grant and are fitted out and furnished by a specially set up SICA.

Supplementary income is often provided by so-called Mazenot Contracts which have been signed in the past for the upkeep of footpaths, maintenance of firebreaks, rearing of horses, agricultural experiments, etc.

The Park Authorities are also making great efforts to organise the rational collection and marketing of "la cuillette" (berries, lichens, etc.). The farmers of the Central Park Zone are encouraged to join organisations with the exclusive right to pick berries on the communal property, the forestry authority lands and on land held by absentee landowners. The members of this Association are also paid as Wardens. Of course, the farmers in the Peripheral Zone adjacent to the Park complain bitterly about this exclusive right and the concept has not yet been extended to other areas such as mushroom picking. The Park Authority is still seen by many farmers as an imposition by the State on their individual and collective rights but the Director, a shrewd diplomat as well as an ecologist, who participates enthusiastically in the farmers' local hunting parties, is slowly making progress despite the fact that his budget has been curtailed as part of France's austerity measures. It is yet to be seen whether the political will which set up and maintained the National Park concept in the 1970's will survive the changed priorities and national recession of the 1980's.

3.3 The development of agriculture in Lozère since the War

Agriculturally, Lozère is considered to be one of the most backward Départements in France. And yet, even this remote, tradition-bound and relatively infertile land has witnessed some remarkable changes since the War. These vary greatly from one part of the area to another. Traditional farming techniques in Lozère as we have seen in the last chapter are a 20th century adaptation partly to the land and partly to an uncertain outside market. They were essentially characterised by low inputs and low outputs and by a careful avoidance of putting all the farm eggs in one basket. Nowadays, in the wake of economic progress, these traditional farms are usually occupied by older men and more specifically by older bachelors who are

more concerned with a reasonable living than with record yields. This was not, of course, always the case. It has been noted that in Margeride the rye-growing sheep-rearing subsistence farmer was generally supplemented early in this century by the small scale cattle rearer.

Out of the subsistence farm's domestic dairying activities there gradually evolved a trend towards calf production for local markets. Calving was spread throughout the year but concentrated towards the end of the winter when the nursing cow had access to fresh spring pasture. There were about a dozen local markets specialising in 3-4 month old veal calves. Any surplus milk was converted to butter or cheese on the farm. Hay and cereals were grown for winter fodder and the only fertilizer used was manure with very occasionally some liming of the soil. Heifers were invariably bought in and replacement was rarely achieved on the farm. During the sixties artificial insemination enabled the mixed herds to be improved with an admixture of Limousin or Charolais.

This traditional pattern has developed in a number of directions as the agricultural measures of the sixties and seventies increasingly encouraged greater specialisation. These were the farms which I was shown around by the Chamber of Agriculture.

In some cases, surplus milk was bought up by the newly formed purchasing cooperatives. An additional incentive was provided by a processing factory set up to produce "appellation controllee" cheeses such as Bleu d'Auvergne and Cantal. This, coupled with guaranteed prices in the sixties, drew many farmers gradually into dairying. Nowadays, dairying is often taken up by the young farmer with 20-40 hectares where expansion is blocked by the surrounding land market. He is encouraged by the grants system to plough up and reseed his former rough grazing, making the most intensive use possible of available land. Some larger farms are content to practise low intensity dairying with the minimum of bought-in concentrates and a fairly low milk yield. Others are in a transitionary stage from calf rearing to dairying and are progressively improving their herd. Having been encouraged into dairying often by the enthusiasm of the local DDA officials as well as the Government grants, these farmers regarded the imposition of milk quotas as an act of betrayal and special derogations have been forced upon the authorities.

In the valley between Mont Lozère and the Margeride I came across what my Chamber of Agriculture guide called a "village dynamique". All the young farmers of the village had followed each other into milk production, promoting the Montbelliard breed foreign to the region. It could almost be seen as a kind of training college where young men with limited acreage were taught the principles of pasture management by the administration through intensive dairying. Many would hope one day to increase their landholding and move on perhaps to stockrearing but for the moment the market for milk provided a guaranteed and regular income (the prospect of quotas notwithstanding).

Although veal production has declined in Margeride, new Italian markets have opened up for very young store calves (15 days - 3 weeks). The marketing of these began among dairy farmers who had improved their herd and then turned to the cooperative marketing of calves in fattening sheds.

But the variations in cattle breeding systems are almost endless and it is difficult to generalise. M. Rodiband and his wife, both in their forties, worked a farm 2,000 feet up on one of the rare patches of red sandstone between Margeride and Aubrac. He kept 35-40 cows, cross Aubrac-Charolais and was starting to build up a calf rearing business. This required a complete restructuring of his outbuildings which he had built by hand over the years and he had been granted aid within the framework of the IDP programme. For two years he had bought in 5 day old calves from the local dairy producers, fattening them on reconstituted milk or granulates, selling them on to the Italian market at 15 days old. He had begun to experiment with fattening and with the help of the local producers coop had already sold a dozen two-year old heifers for slaughter in Northern France.

The farmer still produced cereals for winter fodder and bedding straw (which was now cleaned out regularly with the aid of a mechanical rake). He hoped to improve the upland pasture over the next few years with the aid of further IDP grants.

Extensive beef cattle rearing began on the high Margeride plateau where formerly large farms produced draught cattle combined with cheesemaking. Mechanisation and the rising cost of labour caused them to turn to store stock rearing in the 1950's. More recently, their numbers have been added to by farms which had been able to expand often as a result of SAFER intervention.

In Aubrac, I came across two farmers of about 35-40 years who had both taken the Young Farmers Grant (DJA) and Development Plan subsidies some years ago to set up intensive breeding systems - one specialising in cross breeds and the other in pure pedigree Aubrac. They had used the auspices of the local SAFER to exchange land parcels which they had acquired on what was formerly common pasture.

The Aubrac breeder fattened his heifers at 2½ years mainly on the good quality high pasture. His colleague with less good pasture land fattened indoors at 2 years on bought-in cereals and a little concentrate. He was experimenting with silage making and currently had an application in for Special Integrated Development Programme assistance towards drainage and ground clearance in his higher pastures. They marketed their animals through a Producers Group at around 500 kilos liveweight. Their farmhouses were spacious, modern and well-equipped and one supplemented his income by letting a "gîte" to tourists in the summer.

The old pattern of sheep rearing may be almost dead in Lozère but new patterns are developing. Although the Causses rather than Margeride is the prime sheep rearing country it is not directly comparable to North East Scotland because of the calcareous nature of the soil and the problems of irrigation. Even Margeride sheep are very different from their Grampian counterparts. About one third of the Département's farms still keep some sheep. They are kept primarily to make use of small unproductive fields or rough grazing which the cattle cannot reach. They are also adept at gleaning grass after cattle have been turned out of a field. Very often it is the task of older parents on a farm to tend the sheep now that the village shepherd has disappeared.

Within the past decade those farmers in Margeride who keep a supplement of sheep have been turning from the production of fat lambs to the rearing of 3 week old stores which are fattened outside the area. Those farms which still fatten use home grown cereals plus some concentrate. The traditional coppicing of branches for fodder is dying out because of the manpower requirements.

There are a few farmers in upland Margeride who specialise in sheep production on the old trans-humance plateaux. These herds of "blanches de Lozère" manage three lambings every two years with 150 lambs for every 100 sheep (an average herd size). In summer the sheep graze on extensive moorland and

in winter they are fed on silage and concentrates in large fattening sheds.

Nowhere was the breakdown of the old pastoral system more devastating than on the Causses plateaux. The population dropped rapidly throughout this century and was particularly marked in the 1950's. Teams of sociologists, economists and agronomists have been sent in by Government agencies to find a solution.

In contrast to the Margeride, the soils all have a relatively high Ph level but most are thin, porous and unproductive with the exception of scattered pockets of red clay which are suitable for cultivation. The lands were originally owned by the Church or the aristocracy and farmed on a small scale by tenants who grew rye and raised sheep or on a larger scale by the representatives of the owners who hired local labour.

The early part of this century saw a transfer from wool and cereal production towards sheep milk production for Roquefort cheese but this declined markedly in the fifties and the present day economy is built around sheep rearing either for slaughter or for stores production. Those milk producers who remained were substantially modernised and enlarged in the 1960's and 1970's. Those producing sheepmeat also benefited substantially from Government grants for equipment and low interest loans. They either turned towards the production of spring lambs raised outside and sold in autumn, or towards sheep raised indoors on bought-in feedstuffs and locally grown fodder. The construction of buildings and the clearing of land for fodder production was expensive and most of these by now large scale farmers are heavily in debt.

Further east in the Cévennes, in many cases, it might be said that progress made in developing the local agricultural economy has been in spite of Government action rather than because of it. The pre-War social and economic changes of this truly mountain region were not examined in detail in the last chapter because there is no region in Scotland quite like it. The same could be said of France. It would really have needed a rural development policy of its own before any real impact could have been made on the drastic population decline which has taken place this century. Even with such a measure the authorities would probably have to seal the area off from outside markets to make any real impact.

Briefly, this highly fragmented area developed in the 19th century a pattern of small semi-subsistence farms growing a wide range of products on steep terraces along the mountain slopes. Additional revenue was secured by the growing of mulberries for silkworm production and chestnut trees, partly to market the fruit and partly to provide fodder for sheep which were also reared. This entire complex system of polyculture has collapsed during this century as the area has been drawn further into national and international market systems within which it could not compete successfully.

I was directed towards one of the few agricultural success stories - a goat stud farm set up by a local agronomist in 1960. I asked him about Government grants but it was clear that he had a deep suspicion of "fonctionnaires" and form-filling. He prided himself in having developed an installation unique in France on his own initiative and with his own resources but ironically was at the same time apprehensive about the future because of the lack of interest shown by Government agencies.

Goat rearing began in the fifties as a supplementary cash provider - an alternative to mulberries and chestnut cultivation. Herds have gradually increased as other sources of livelihood have been eroded. Their numbers have been added to in recent years by the new "back-to-the-land" semi-subsistence farmers who have settled in the Cévennes with its multitude of abandoned farms. A Cooperative collects and markets the milk which is collected each week by refrigerated lorry to be marketed in the cities or transformed into cheese in the neighbouring Département. Only the smallest producers make their own cheese and, as far as the region is concerned, the value added is minimal. The producers are now looking toward the Arab markets to the south from which there is already a small demand for carcasses on special holidays.

A young medium-sized goat breeder whom I visited was in the process of converting from sheep fattening to goat rearing. He had about 30 goats and the same number of sheep and had received grants through the IDP to install an automatic milking parlour. His wife was out looking after the goats which were feeding on chestnuts, berries and leaves on the other side of the valley while he spent his time constructing the building to house the milking parlour. The effective subsidy on the building was higher if built by the farmer himself and this provided a useful supplement to his income.

Much of the Cévennes comes within the jurisdiction of the National Park. As already noted, it is the only inhabited Park in France and special measures have been devised for agricultural activities.

A sheep farmer whom I met on the high pastureland had been given extra cash to design and build a sheep grange which blended in with its surroundings. He kept 270 sheep, the upper limit for headage payment subsidy and his grange had cost him £50,000, partly financed within a five-year Development Plan and partly by the Credit Agricole through a low interest loan. The sheep were brought down to the building every night and remained there for 2-3 months in the winter. There is no collection system for sheep's milk in the Cévennes and most sheep are raised for slaughter with wool as a supplementary byproduct. The lambs are born either in spring or in winter and sold at 2-3 months at the Easter or back-end sales. This type of extensive sheep rearing is, however, something of a rarity in the Cévennes where the few practitioners try to emulate the large scale sheep rearers of the neighbouring Causses.

3.4 A present day comparison with Upland Grampian

Before leaving agriculture an attempt will be made to draw some present day comparisons with North East Scotland. It has already been noted how much more quickly the market-oriented farming system developed in the North East and how few small semi-subsistence farmers there were left by the 2nd World War. This different pace of historical change is further exemplified in the official statistics for the 1980's. I have tried in the following section to compare, where possible, like with like and have concentrated on Upland Grampian and the Margeride, setting aside the rich Grampian lowlands on the one hand and the specialised farming systems of the Causses and the Cévennes on the other. As we have noted, both Margeride and Upland Grampian have granite based acidic soils with rainfall in the range 750-900 mm per annum well spread throughout the year. The Margeride is marginally more continental than Upland Grampian with warmer summers and colder winters but the growing conditions (frost free days, soil temperature, etc.) appear to be remarkably similar given the difference in latitude. This is, of course, purely a function of altitude with much of Margeride's cultivated area lying above 2,500 feet.

i) The importance of agriculture to the local economy

Despite the fact that Grampian is considered to be an agricultural region, it developed a manufacturing base in the main towns during the early 20th century. It also possesses other primary industries such as fishing and, latterly, oil extraction. The Lozère economy has never diversified and, while Grampian has 7% of its resident population engaged in agriculture, the corresponding figure for Lozère is 22%. In Upland Grampian, however, away from the coast, the main towns and the regional capital, the farming industry is much more dominant, directly employing almost 17% of the active population. Neither oil nor fishing has much influence. The percentage is kept down to 17% by the local importance of whisky manufacture which is no longer directly related to agriculture. Present day linkages both upstream and downstream of the farm production unit are few in both Margeride and Upland Grampian, although Margeride produces more of the inputs to the stockrearing system in the form of home grown cereals.

ii) The structure of farming

Average farm size in the extensive Upland Grampian farms is 176 hectares compared with 48 hectares in Margeride, although with farm amalgamation and the continuing incorporation of the common lands, the average for Margeride is growing faster than in the Causses or Aubrac which have averages of 70 and 62 hectares respectively. Farm numbers are steadily declining in both countries and it seems at first remarkable that despite the highly developed nature of Grampian farming the rate of farm amalgamation over the past decade has been on a par with that in Lozère. However, whilst the main thrust of British agricultural policy since the War has been towards raised production levels and greater efficiency (even in the uplands), in France as we have seen, these aims have been tempered by policies which favoured the small family farm and the retention of upland populations.

Having already highlighted the historical origins of the different land tenure differences

in Lozère and Grampian it might also seem surprising that the land tenure statistics are so similar for the two areas.

Table 1: Land tenure - percentage of total agriculture land

	Lozère	Grampian	Margeride	Upland Grampian
Owning	57%	60%	51%	55%
Renting	43%	40%	49%	45%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

Source: Agricultural Census (UK) 1981
Agricultural Census (Fr) 1980

Upland Grampian is still predominantly a renting area although the proportion of land rented is declining with some being bought out and some being taken in hand by the landowner. Margeride, on the other hand, is a region of small landowners whose expansion is blocked by the structural problems already referred to. They respond by renting the land of their neighbour who is usually too old to farm and too attached to the land to sell out. There are often year-to-year grazing leases with no written contract and no investment in land improvement. Even where a neighbour is willing to sell out, the pent up demand for land and the competition from public agencies and second home owners pushes up the price of land and makes the process of assembling a viable farm unit a long and expensive process. The amount of rented land has thus almost doubled in Lozère over the past 15 years whilst in Grampian it has steadily declined.

A convergent pattern can be seen with respect to labour deployment. Hired farm labour has continued to decline on upland farms in Grampian as mechanisation developed, wages increased and margins were squeezed. In recent years, there has been a greater use of retained family labour, an understandable pattern in a time of high unemployment. In Margeride as in the rest of Lozère, the family has long been the basic work unit on the farm and hired labour is rare except on the largest farms which represent only a small percentage of the total.

Table 2: Numbers of farm occupiers and staff

	Lozère	Grampian	Margeride	Upland Grampian
Full time occupiers	3,243	3,297	2,012	869
($\frac{1}{2}$ time or more)	1,042	609	599	154
($\frac{1}{2}$ time or less)	<u>1,037</u>	<u>855</u>	<u>419</u>	<u>227</u>
Total Occupiers	5,322	4,761	3,030	1,250
(Total number of holdings)	(5,322)	(6,401)	(3,030)	(1,660)
<hr/>				
Regular Full Time Staff	108	3,907	43	631
Regular Part Time Staff [1]	<u>105</u>	<u>927</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>188</u>
Total Regular Staff	213	4,836	96	819

[1] Figures for family farm labour not comparable

Table 2 also demonstrates the slightly lesser importance of part time farming in Grampian although in both regions this element of the farm population has remained stable over recent years whilst full time farm numbers have declined.

iii) The pattern of land use

Agriculture accounts for 65% of the total land surface in Lozère in comparison to 72% in Grampian. The difference is mainly due to the greater forest cover in the Lozère uplands, greater than Grampian's forest and moorland combined.

A broad comparison of land use in the two areas reveals some important differences and similarities but it does not reveal the productivity of the land or the intensity of use. The figures for Grampian relate to 1981, whilst those for Lozère are drawn from the 1980 census. There have been changes since these dates but the figures give a fair overall comparison. Where possible, long term trends are indicated in brackets in the tables. These cover the period 1970 to 1980 in Lozère and 1972 to 1981 in Grampian.

Table 3: Cereals as a percentage of total farm area [1]

	Lozère	Grampian	Margeride	Upland Grampian
Wheat	0.5% (-51%)	0.7% (-23%)	0.2% (N/A)	0.1% (-38%)
Barley	1.7% (-55%)	20.8% (+34%)	1.2% (")	6.8% (+65%)
Maize	- (-)	- (-)	- (")	- (-)
Oats	0.8% (-38%)	2.0% (-59%)	1.1% (")	1.1% (-68%)
Rye	1.5% (-32%)	- (-)	2.3% (")	- (-)
Total Cereals	4.7% (-29%)	23.5% (-6%)	4.8% (")	8.0% (+5%)
Total in Hectares	15,228	148,594	8,234	23,275

[1] Including buildings, farm woodland and rough grazing

The outstanding feature of Table 3 is the decline in cereal growing which has taken place in Lozère over the past decade compared with the net rise in Upland Grampian which has seen a rapid expansion of barley as a cash crop. Barley, although not nearly so widespread, has also increased in popularity in Lozère but generally it is not regarded as a cash crop but as a fodder supplement. The figures appear to demonstrate the ability of the Upland Grampian farm to adapt rapidly to changing market conditions in the face of diminishing livestock returns as well as the unwillingness or inability of Lozère farmers to buy in feedstuffs from outside, but it would take a detailed and specialist agricultural investigation to test the proposition. There may be additional climatic factors not accounted for in the table.

Table 4: Root crops as a percentage of total farm area

	Lozère	Grampian	Margeride	Upland Grampian
Potatoes	0.3	1.1	0.4	0.2
Other Root Crops (incl. non-root stockfeed)	0.1	2.9	0.2	1.8
Total	0.4	4.0	0.6	2.0
Total (hectares)	(1,425)	(18,538)	(1,028)	(5,994)

Due also to special climatic factors, Grampian is, of course, the home of the seed potato whereas in Lozère potatoes are grown mainly for local consumption. The higher use of non-cereal stockfeed crops such as swedes is particularly marked in Grampian.

Because of the many types and qualities of grass and the many ways of growing, storing and using it, a statistical comparison would be misleading. The figures do demonstrate, however, the overall importance of grassland in both areas. The amount of silage making has increased considerably in Lozère over the past decade but it is still considerably lower than in Grampian.

The area of land devoted to temporary pasture has doubled in Lozère over the past 10 years indicating a move away from the traditional hayfield plus rough pasture calf-rearing system towards dairying in many areas.

Although definitions may vary slightly, it is clear that farms in both areas are dominated by rough grazing. The significance of this is examined in the following section when live-stock figures are compared.

Table 5: Farm woodland as a percentage of total farm area

Lozère	Grampian	Margeride	Upland Grampian
11.2%	1.0%	13%	0.7%

Generally speaking, most Upland Grampian farms have been denuded of trees except those essential for shelter or rough shooting. It is interesting as a crop only to the specialist grower and even then only under special financial arrangements which are considered in more detail in the next chapter.

Timber is still an important supplementary farm crop in Margeride where, as noted in Chapter I, it has been cultivated for centuries. In this century, however, as cattle rearing intensified, pastures close to the farm were more intensively cultivated, leaving inaccessible higher pastures ungrazed and often untended. Without the ravages of deer or intensive sheep grazing, the land

reseeded naturally particularly those areas which had been formerly tilled and now the farmers are being offered incentives to rationalise those areas. The information leaflets of the Chamber of Agriculture extol the economic benefits of selective harvesting of Scots pine leading to faster growth, more resistance to disease and snow damage as well as better access for animals who undergraze in the later stages of the forest's life. The forest is, therefore, an important source of fodder as well as timber for furniture, palletwood and fuel. The forest is also an important source of that additional revenue known as "la cuillette" - the lichens and plants distilled into perfume or the berries and mushrooms gathered and exported to the surrounding markets.

Further south in the Cévennes, "la cuillette" is even more important on the smaller farms but the main woodland activity is the coppicing of chestnut trees for fenceposts and floor coverings. In some parts of the Cévennes, new varieties of chestnut are making a comeback, financed by the IDP. As in Margeride, the area has extensive private woodland covering an underutilised land that was formerly in pasture but attempts by SAFER to involve local farmers in extensive upland forest planting schemes employing exotic species were unsuccessful. Despite generous incentives the small farmers were either undercapitalised or disinterested and most of the shares allocated in the Forest Group went to outsiders.

The last big drive to plant trees on Lozère farms came at the beginning of the century when the peasant's own newspaper gave details of farm-forestry techniques. A second drive is currently underway with the help of EEC subsidies. Timber is one product which is not in surplus and future programmes of assistance are to be anticipated. British negotiators have in the past been against aid for farm based forestry fearing that the Continental nations will secure a proportionally greater clawback on the deal.

iv) Livestock rearing patterns

Table 6: Livestock numbers

	Lozère	Grampian	Margeride	Upland Grampian
Dairy herd	27,600	28,000	22,000	2,400
Breeding Cows	28,700	105,000	14,200	46,200
Calves (under 1 yr.)	20,000	148,500	12,800	47,500
Calves (over 1 yr.)	25,000	224,000	16,800	40,800
Total cattle	101,300	510,500	70,800	138,400
Total sheep	205,000	602,500	55,400	275,500
Total goats	8,900	N/A	1,300	N/A
Livestock units	144,080	631,000	82,140	144,000
Area under stockfeed crops and grass	254,760	236,844	133,155	70,996
Livestock units per hectare under stockfeed crops and grass	0.56	2.66	0.6	2.0

NB: 15 sheep or goats = 1 cow or calf

These are crude comparisons indeed and ignore factors such as the amount of cereal land devoted to fodder crops but they are sufficient to demonstrate the major differences between a high input/high output system with an important reliance on imported feedstuffs and intensive rearing - and a relatively low input/low output system which grows most of its fodder locally. The comparison between the Lozère and Grampian figures is not strictly a fair one because Lozère has only a limited fertile lowland plain, but the Margeride-Upland Grampian comparison is reasonable. It should also be noted that the land not devoted to fodder cereals is used in Grampian for cash crop barley, increasing the farmer's income and enabling him to further intensify his livestock system with bought in feedstuff.

v) Farm output and income

These figures are further amplified when the farm cash output figures are compared to the total output for Grampian - appearing to be several times that of Lozère even if differences in farm area are taken into account.

Because of differences in definition between the two countries, income is also difficult to compare. It is measured in a number of different ways in both countries and depends on machinery depreciation costs, breeding livestock appreciation, allowances for the labour input of the farmer and his wife, levels of overdraft, etc.

In Lozère, so-called average gross revenue per farm, that is value of farm production minus inputs and charges (feed, fertilizer, taxes, insurance, rent and salaries) plus all forms of grant, worked out in 1981 at around £3,500 per farm. In Upland Grampian, average net farm income, that is total output minus total costs but including an element which reflects breeding livestock appreciation, was estimated at around £12,700 per farm. This figure rises to £19,300 in the rest of Grampian. Although as already stated these comparisons should be treated with caution (particularly as the Grampian farm sample represents some of the more go-ahead farms) they do indicate broad differences in the scale and profitability of farms in the two areas.

It is also important to note that these figures are averages and the divergence between the modern "exploitant dynamique" in Lozère and the old semi-subsistence "paysan" is still great, thus lowering the overall average. Neither do they say much about the lot of the smaller Grampian farmer. Furthermore, the income of the Upland Grampian farmer has levelled out and in some cases has declined in real terms over the past decade while the income of the modern Lozère farmer appears recently to have grown sharply. Neither do the figures take account of the overdraft situation or the level of grant aid which is invested by the respective Governments in the farming systems. These are the only comparisons, however, which a non-specialist can make in the absence of any specialised studies.

[1] Unpublished paper by P Leat, School of Agriculture, Aberdeen (based on sample of 27 farms)

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how upland farming in Lozère has been influenced by two competing policy objectives - the drive to develop upland farming because it is seen to be backward compared with farming in the lowlands - and the move to compensate farmers for their natural handicaps in relation to farmers elsewhere.

The policy of development has concentrated on measures to free the land market to open up and improve new land and to intensify production. Because of the political balance within the farmers' representative bodies, these have been more geared towards the small farmer than the large as is the case in this country, but the underlying aim has been to rationalise the factors of production so allowing the small mountain farmer to "catch up" in terms of living standards with his lowland counterpart.

The policy of compensation began with the ISM or headage payment in the mid-sixties, a measure blatantly contrary to the spirit and the letter of the Treaty of Rome. It was originally intended as a transfer of resources to achieve social objectives and it appears to have kept this function in France whilst being used as a stimulus to production in the UK as part of the Government's longstanding self-sufficiency policy.

The problem with development policies in areas like Lozère which already suffer from natural handicaps is that the more the area is developed, the more it will be opened up to outside markets and the more rational use it will have to make of all the factors of production if farm incomes are not to lag behind. This means that it will have to achieve a higher level of output per hectare, increasing the cost of its inputs (fertilizer, feedstuffs, etc.) if it is to "catch up" with the lowland farm. Of course, the lowland farms are also competing, rationalising and intensifying - so all other things being equal, the upland farmer finds himself running in order to stay still as seems to be the case in Upland Grampian.

This, of course, can mean higher farm productivity and higher incomes at least in the short term, but it will also mean continuing rural depopulation through further farm amalgamation, continuing product specialisation, greater intensification of land use

with consequent changes in landscape and more importation of products manufactured in the urban areas. This may once have been a seductive route for the central planners in France to follow but it appears less attractive at a time when the uplands' major farm products are in surplus and most European markets for food are stagnant or, in the case of meat, actually in decline.

However, the policy of compensation has equal difficulties in a time of public spending restrictions. In itself, it is restricted by the extent to which the national farming community will come to the aid of its disadvantaged upland members when the industry as a whole is facing cutbacks in spending. Nevertheless, the policy has set an important precedent in terms of the Rome Treaty, a permanent transfer of resources to a particularly disadvantaged type of area not linked to any attempt at economic development but as a social/regional measure - the problem being seen as one of permanent inequalities brought about by the operation of the market rather than one of assisting the development of those parts of the market unable to enter into free competition because of obstacles imposed by history or geography.

It will be interesting to see whether the principle of cash transfer will be taken any further in the Mitterand Government's mountain policy. Will new outlets be found in the mountain areas for the resources which are currently tied up in headage payments development schemes and higher levels of grant? The time might be right to start deploying these resources in other ways - into non-agricultural aspects of the farm economy such as tourism or environmental protection or into other aspects of the rural economy - forestry or small businesses. Lozère has seen experiments in both these directions and the following chapters examine them in greater detail.

IV FORESTRY IN LOZERE - THE CONTINUING EXPLOITATION OF THE MOUNTAINS OR AN ASPECT OF MOUNTAIN POLICY?

In this country the importance of forestry's contribution to rural development and particularly to employment creation was severely questioned in a 1973 Treasury Report and the emphasis since that time has been on its importance to the national economy and to the balance of payments. Over the past decade, mechanisation and centralisation have continued to dominate the industry and have largely validated the conclusions of the 1973 Report. Nevertheless, with market surpluses in all upland products other than timber the European Commission has recently been putting forward proposals to encourage farm forestry within the framework of the revised Structures Directive and there are discussions progressing on the establishment of an EEC Forestry Policy and possibly a Forestry Fund. There has been little tradition of farm forestry in this country and it is understood that UK Government policy at present is to block any moves towards financial measures which may be more neatly tailored to continental needs rather than our own.

Against this background, it is appropriate to consider more closely the role of forestry in the Lozère economy and more particularly the extent to which it contributes to the development of local as opposed to the national economy. Are there any lessons which could be learned in this country if the measures in the proposed Directive are approved or if IDPs with a forestry element become an accepted part of regional rural development?

4.1 The early development of forests in Lozère

Some of the history of forest development has already been touched on in Chapters II and III in the agricultural context. Much of the conflict between foresters and peasants centred around what was forest and what was not. Lozère has always had an indeterminate band of scrubland between the cultivated patches and the pastures and forests of the higher land which ebbed and flowed with population changes.

The forest cover had reached an all-time low in Lozère 135 years ago when the population level was at its highest. Then only 5% of the land was afforested

mainly consisting of the old church and aristocratic estates, but as we have seen in Chapter II, a Forest Authority had already been established for the area and had been unsuccessfully attempting to bring much of the common lands under its control for a number of years. In the middle of the 19th century, a series of devastating floods eroded much of the Cévennes hillsides and inundated the plain below. The forestry laws of 1860 and 1882 were designed to stabilise the slopes by consolidating the subsoil and to slow down the rate of water runoff. After a number of excesses following the 1860 law, compromises were worked out between the administration and the peasants whereby a certain amount of grazing was allowed on land controlled by the Forest Authority. With the decline in population the conflicts began to melt away.

This century has seen further population decline and further inroads by the Forest Authority particularly onto the common lands which the villages increasingly offered up to be managed by the Authority as the agro-pastoral system declined. In addition, the early part of this century saw a resurgence of planting by the farmers themselves who had little use for their distant sheep pastures once they had converted to cattle rearing. Neither was there enough winter fodder to keep sufficient cattle to graze these rough pastures and where trees were not planted they invaded naturally onto the underutilised land. This was true of both common land and formerly common land split up amongst the villagers. On the higher land, the larger landowners, hit by the decline in transhumance, sold out to the Forestry Authority which was thus able to constantly add to its holdings over the period up to 1939, always justifying its purchases in terms of the ecological objectives of the 1860 and 1882 Acts.

By 1939 the area of the Département covered by forest had risen to 27% and a reafforestation plan to convert pine and beech into exotic softwood forests was drawn up by the Forest Authorities before the War intervened.

4.2 The pattern of forestry development in Lozère since 1946

A special forest fund was created under the 1946 National Plan. Known as the FFN[1], it was based upon a special tax on timber products and in Lozère at first took the form of free plants distributed to farmers on demand and usually used to fill up odd

[1] Fond Forestier National

corners and small or inaccessible fields. Later in the fifties work contracts were offered for larger areas. Financial loans were instituted in 1960 and grants in 1970 either for individuals or Forest Groupings. In France as in this country, tax concessions have been an additional incentive but the 30-year exoneration from the payment of local land tax has been criticised for depriving the local communes of sufficient funds to provide necessary services to the rest of the community. This is a particular complaint against absentee forest owners. The most recent form of state forestry assistance in Lozère are the funds set aside in the IDP towards forest related activities. These include assistance towards thinning and clearing of pinewoods, chestnut plantation and improvement of pasture under trees. These measures can only be understood against the background of Lozère's various farming systems. Why, for example, did the authorities call for planting grants towards chestnut plantations but thinning grants for pinewoods?

Of Lozère's 192,000 hectares under forest fully 72% belong to small owners having an average of 7 hectares each. Many of them are farmers but some are absentee landowners who have either emigrated to the towns or have inherited land on the death of a relative. This forest land is divided up amongst an astonishing 20,000 owners!

Only 17% of the forest land is owned directly by the Forest Authority[1] with the remaining 11% held by the village communes. The law obliges communes to submit their wooded land to the Forest Authority which manages it on behalf of the inhabitants. The costs of management are borne by the commune but the returns on timber sold revert to the local coffers.

Turning to the recent pattern of forestry development in three of Lozère's main sub-regions, it is not surprising to find different conditions in all three areas on account of the differences in soil - granite, schist and limestone. Nevertheless, in all three sub-regions, the small private owner is dominant.

In Margeride the proportion of privately owned forest is close to the Lozère average of 72%. Here, however, state acquisitions to plant and consolidate land were not so extensive because there are fewer steep slopes subject to erosion. The State currently owns 7% of the wooded area. The proportion of communal wooded

[1] Since 1964, the Office National des Forêts (ONF)

land is relatively high at 21%. Most of this has been submitted to the Forestry Authority for management. Under these "contracts of submission", the Authority controls felling but allows a certain amount of undergrazing. (This in fact allows the pine to grow better by removing the stifling undergrowth such as heather.) Since the War, a number of communes have made use of the financial incentives available to afforest bare land which was no longer used for grazing.

Some villages, especially those on the higher ground, simply asked for their entire communal land to be reafforested. Others availed themselves of joint schemes whereby the Forest Authority acquired the worst land in exchange for pasture improvement on the better pasture. This would then be shared or rented out to villagers mainly for cattle rearing. The spread of Grouped Operations of Land Management (OGAF) in the 1970's allowed the villages to reclaim and distribute large blocks of pasture land without recourse to the Forest Authority.

On the private land, the bulk of afforestation was carried out by older farmers who chose not to enlarge their grazing area although nine out of ten farms have woods and 20% of their land is under forest. There are also investments by outsiders either inheritors or investors. During the sixties the big paper companies of the Rhone Valley began to experiment with vertical integration systems and bought up forest areas which they were forced to sell in the recession of 1973-75. Nowadays, insurance companies are increasingly using the Forest Fund to buy up land as a long-term investment or as an attempt to diversify their portfolio.

There are a few large landowners as in this country who employ specialist labour but they are very much in the minority. There are also a few farmers who devote their winters to forest management but the bulk of the forest area is very much a mixed bag inadequately supervised either by its owner or by the Forest Authority. This creates a great diversity of landscape and creates a certain amount of local income but there is little doubt that the forests could be more productive and supply a greater volume to the local timber industry if planting and management procedures were improved.

The most striking feature of the Margeride landscape

to an observer used to the neat and regular blocks of forest which are scattered over upland farmland in this country is the gradual continuum which still exists in many areas between dense forest and pasture land. For the best part of this century a debate has been going on between the relative merits of the old multiple use semi-wooded areas (which are useful for fuel, grazing, mushrooms, etc.) and the system of single use fenced off areas devoted either to intensive grazing or alternatively to intensive forestry. The latter system is slowly gaining ground and many areas are now covered by zoning plans laid down by Communal Commissions which indicate land most appropriate for each particular use. The economic justification for this strict zoning is being increasingly questioned by agricultural analysts. It is argued that more people can live from the multiple land use system than from one based on segregated units and this is part of the thinking behind the IDP incentives to thin and rationalise existing woodland, so producing a regular supplement to the farm income. In this country, as long as there is intensive grazing of sheep or deer in the uplands destroying the naturally regenerating forest, it is unlikely to be a realistic option.

In the Cévennes Mountains large areas of forest are owned by the ONF particularly in the National park where they are now productive forests administered with strict guidelines protecting the amenity of the area. They were originally planted to retain water and control erosion, but are now one of the area's most attractive tourist features.

Private owners are still predominant with 71% of the wooded area. As elsewhere in Lozère, landowners get together into Productivity and Management Groupings to secure grant and low interest loans in order to put together a block of forest. The intention is that the farmers ultimately enter into group marketing arrangements but despite encouragement from SAFER, the farmers rarely retain ownership preferring to sell off their shares to outside speculators. There is, therefore, a kind of ratchet effect whereby land is progressively taken out of low intensity agricultural use and into forestry use with a preponderance of absentee ownership.

Elsewhere in the Cévennes, there are substantial areas of old chestnut plantations. Most are now dying either from disease or impoverished soils but their remaining fruit is still gathered by the locals and fed to the sheep and goats. Recently, two rather more resistant

hybrid varieties have been developed and the IDP includes finance to aid the regeneration of the chestnut industry as well as the improvement of grazing areas under the old trees because here again was a mixed-use productive system.

The Causses has a climate and a soil unfavourable to tree production. Nevertheless, the large scale abandonment of the land during the sixties combined with FFN subsidies led to forest blocks being planted on some of the better land. Modern large scale farmers are not particularly interested in tree growing and are more concerned with cutting back and uprooting the invasive pine. This is a costly business for which the return in terms of timber sales is minimal. This contrasts with the smaller farmer of the Margeride who is able to achieve a reasonable return given the application of good management techniques. New afforestation on the Causses is carried out on the higher clay based lands either by absentee owners or by Development Societies such as SOMICAC encouraged by EEC FEOGA grants but the growth rate and production of the forests is fairly mediocre. On the communal land, forest groupings have been set up but they are more concerned with the rational allocation of the communal land into grazing and woodland lots than with forestry production per se.

Some individuals have begun to make use of the IDP grants for thinning and rationalisation of trees which have naturally regenerated since the 1950's but on this type of land the revenue is unlikely to be substantial and the Caussenards are more drawn towards further forest clearing and pasture improvement.

4.3 The institutional structure of the forestry industry

Compared with agriculture the institutional structure of Lozère's forest industry is relatively straightforward. Indeed, the ONF is a sub-section of the Ministry of Agriculture but with the separate juridical status of "établissement public".

Given the importance of forestry to the local farmers it is not surprising to find the Union of Forestry Proprietors based at the Chamber of Agriculture in Mende. They have helped form a number of Forestry Production and Management Groupings (GGPF) which are able to attract public funds towards the technical

support of farmers attempting to grow or market forest products but the number of farmers specialising in forestry to this extent is still small. Members of the Union organise their marketing by making regular lists of all the timber they have for sale as a group and sending the list round the main processors who have to bid against each other. In this way, the power of the small producer in the market is strengthened as in other fields of agriculture.

4.4 Downstream processing facilities

It is difficult to estimate how much of the timber processed in Lozère is of local provenance or conversely how much processed outside comes from Lozère. There is a constant traffic in timber across the Departmental boundaries but the local Forestry Department estimates that imports approximately balance exports.

Lozère's average annual production is 310,000 cubic metres for 192,000 hectares of forest or about 1.6 cubic metres per hectare, a low figure held down by the large percentage of small uncommercial woodlands. Sixty percent of this is manufactured into finished products - fence posts, pallet wood, telegraph poles, etc. and the remainder is used for pulp.

Given the high percentage of land covered by forest, the number of persons employed in downstream timber processing is small - about 700 or 800 including every category from the one man business to the industrial concern and the figure is declining every year as the timber industry centralises its activities.

Some employment is created in cutting and transporting the timber to the 50 or so small sawmills scattered throughout the region (200 employees). Some woodcutters and transport workers are employed but the work is often carried out on a contract basis by small farmers in winter. On their own lands the farmers usually cut and transport their own timber.

One of the main secondary activities is the treatment of telegraph poles carried out by three factories in the region and employing about 50 men (two factories have recently closed as steel prices have dropped and the Post Office has turned to metal poles). Some additional employment is created at the railhead. The production of mining timber is also in decline with technological changes in the mining industry.

The wood is not of sufficient quality to encourage any significant manufacturing enterprise although each village has its own joiner. The only sizable joinery factory specialises in tropical wood. Most sawmills confine their product to palletwood and boxwood with woodchips being exported to a cellulose factory outside the region. The Ministry of Agriculture has recently made large sums of risk capital available to small scale timber processors through the Credit Agricole and a special financial organisation called IDIBOIS.

Pulpwood is also exported and an attempt to set up a pulpmill some years ago failed because of local fears about pollution. It would probably only have employed about a dozen people in any case because of the capital intensive nature of the operation. More importantly, however, it would have given the local farmers a lucrative outlet for their thinnings.

Some comparisons with Grampian Region

As in Chapter III, we leave aside the special cases of the Causses and the Southern Cévennes and turn to Margeride for our comparison. The similarity in the range of dominant indigenous tree species has already been remarked upon, Scots pine with a scattering of birch and beech. But here the similarities end because of the separate paths of historical development which the two regions have taken and their different social and economic structure today.

Margeride has 72% of its woodland in private ownership but this is concentrated in the hands of small woodland owners whose main occupation is livestock rearing.

In Grampian 55% of the forest is in private hands but this is mainly owned by the big landowners many of whom specialise in forestry although some concentrate more on their sporting interests with their forestry operations as a secondary concern. In the more fertile areas the estate landowners have long since split up their estates and rented them out to farm tenants. The tenants on a lease of a specific duration have no real interest in forestry planting except as shelter for animals and for this purpose they employ fast growing sitka. With intensive sheep grazing on the rough pasture and deer occupying the higher ground, there is rarely the opportunity for pine to reseed naturally as in Margeride. The entire hill in Grampian has been used either for sporting or rearing purposes

for more than a century and a half and the result is that in the uplands only 0.8% of the farm surface is under trees compared to 16% in Margeride. The figure for the whole of Grampian only rises to 1%.

In Margeride, the transition from an agro-pastoral system to a market oriented system, where almost every piece of land is put to specialist use, has been long and slow. As Chapter II demonstrated, this is partly the result of a historically late access to national markets and partly due to the land tenure system which adapted badly to the new market conditions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The slight climatic difference between the two areas is not, therefore, a significant factor in the disparity of tree cover as can be seen from the isolated examples of self-regenerating pine and birch in Grampian where grazing pressures are absent or reduced.

The role of the respective Forest Authorities is also significant, however. It will be recalled that the forest cover in Lozère had reached an all-time low when population was at its peak in 1885. Since that date the Forest Authorities have constantly encouraged and cajoled the collective interests to bring under the Authority's control those areas where pine was beginning to regenerate. This had some influence in bringing about the present day situation whereby four fifths of the common land is under forest, although with the decline of sheep grazing much of this may have regenerated naturally in any case. The area of forest actually bought and planted by the Forest Authorities is relatively small (7%) because erosion is not a major problem but a total of 23% including the submitted communes now comes under their control. Grampian, with virtually no common land left by the mid-19th century and a Forest Authority which did not begin operations until well into the 20th century, did not experience this set of circumstances.

The Forestry Commission from the outset in this country planted with commercial considerations high among its priorities. It began in Grampian by planting the native Scots pine as the large estate owners had done but gradually went over to faster growing exotic species such as sitka as technical knowledge developed. These trees have come to dominate the landscape in many areas.

The aims of the Forestry Authority in Lozère have

historically been much more diffuse - environmental protection being an aim which could encompass a range of local objects or even whims of the local Forest Authority. In Margeride, much of the effort of the planters early in this century went into river bank protection. In the Cévennes the emphasis was on beech plantations to prevent erosion and control the flow of water off the hill. Nowadays these and neighbouring pine forests are managed by the ONF on behalf of the National Park Authority and systems of selective harvesting are employed with mixed species and mixed age replanting.

In both regions the involvement of outside interests is growing. Tax concessions take a different form in both countries and in this country they do not directly deprive the local authorities of revenue. Nevertheless, combined with the problems caused by inflation, they have attracted a new range of absentee landlords into the local land market in both Grampian and Lozère - pension funds, financial institutions and wealthy private individuals wishing to offset their personal tax burden. Increasingly their interests are being managed by specialist firms who, based outside the area, plough, plant, manage and harvest on a contract basis.

The similarities between the two regions are also evident in the area of downstream processing. Neither Lozère nor Grampian has managed to attract a substantial secondary processor and employment is almost entirely concentrated in small scale harvesting and transportation squads as well as a scattering of sawmills. Total employment in Grampian of around 1,200 compared to 800 in Lozère is inflated by the processing of imported timber.

Conclusion

There are then in both Lozère and Grampian two separate ways in which the value of the forest product returns to the local economy. In Lozère the first is dominant - small-scale private farm forestry, supplements the income of the average holding by providing cheap fuel, "la cuillette" and a small supplementary revenue on timber sold at the roadside. Indirectly, it also provides farm income by attracting tourists to what would without the tree cover be an uninteresting and bleak landscape. Measures such as the IDP aid can moderately enhance the value of the product but in no way can this ever be compared to

commercial forestry. Its value lies entirely in its marginal effect on incomes, enabling a larger number of farmers to live off a given area of land. Whilst the value of the end product in terms of timber is low, it should be kept in mind that the costs of establishment and management are also low given the process of natural regeneration and the minimum maintenance costs. Any attempt towards further rationalisation such as an insistence on the planting of fast growing exotic firs alien to the soil and climatic conditions would considerably alter the pattern of costs and returns, not necessarily to the advantage of the farmer and certainly to the detriment of the landscape.

The second, commercial forestry, is far more specialist and more highly developed in Grampian with a much higher production level of timber per hectare but only a small portion of the benefit is ever likely to accrue to the locality in terms either of employment or revenue. In Lozère, the benefits flow out of the region in terms of tax advantages to absentee landowners, employment to major processing plants in the Rhone Valley and revenue to the national exchequer from the state forests. The pattern is not dissimilar in Grampian.

The answer to the question posed in the chapter title is not, therefore, straightforward in the case of Lozère. Certainly in the past, loans and grants have helped farmers to afforest and the recent IDP is assisting them to realise the value of their timber assets, but, with respect to commercial forestry, the amount of benefit accruing to the locality is minimal in comparison to the size of the overall investment.

Turning to the lessons which could be learned in Grampian, it is clear that if forestry was to be an element of a special IDP for Grampian Region or upland Scotland in general, the emphasis would have to be on planting rather than thinning. This would pose particular problems with respect to the tenanted nature of the upland farm structure and any incentives would have to be devised with this in mind. One option might be to sub-let land to the Forestry Commission or to private forestry specialists in the way that communal lands were "submitted" in Lozère but the economic return on this land would be dependent on the alternative use value of the land, this in turn relying particularly on the sheepmeat regime. An alternative might be the return of the management grant - a regular payment (rather than an initial

lump sum) which might help supplement annual revenue. The option of payments to farmers to take land out of production altogether in a time of surplus cannot be discounted. If this land was fenced there could be substantial natural regeneration in 30 years' time with no capital investment at all. Nor should the broadleaved option be ruled out even on the higher land. Indeed, modern establishment techniques combined with growing markets for firewood and veneers probably make this a more attractive option in Scottish conditions.

The involvement of local Lozère farmers in harvesting and transport is also an interesting precedent. Given the extent and the distribution of large private and public forests in Grampian consideration could be given to EEC assisted grants for felling, harvesting and transportation equipment capable of being adapted to existing farm machinery. In this way, work presently moving over to specialist outside concerns could be gradually transferred to local farmers and part at least of the income generated retained in the local upland economy.

Whatever options are attempted, it is clear that of all the upland land based products only timber is likely to be in deficit over the next decade.

V THE SMALL BUSINESS SECTOR

Lozère is probably the least industrialised Département in France, and yet the statistics demonstrate that for every person classified as being employed in agriculture, there is another in industry and three in commerce, transport and the tertiary sector. This is not explained by the presence of any large firm in the region - there are only three firms with more than 100 employees - but by the many small businesses which scatter the rural communes and by the growing importance of the public sector. In Chapter III it was noted how political pressure from within the farming community forced a transfer of resources towards small farms and ultimately towards mountain areas. The pressure from the small business community was never so persistent nor so well organised but in more recent years it has been realised that they too have an important role to play in the local economy of the mountain areas, whether they are manufacturing a product or providing a service.

This chapter sets out to show to what extent Lozère's small businesses have benefited from the battery of regional aid measures which emanated from Paris during the 1970's and to estimate how much better or worse they are likely to fare under the current administration.

5.1 Some examples of local rural development initiatives

Along with a representative of the "Chambre de Métiers", the local Chamber of Small Businesses, I paid a visit to the Butcher and the Baker in Chambon-le-Chateau. This was formerly a thriving market town in the Margeride uplands but now survives only on a small timber yard, a small factory for producing powdered milk and a special school which takes in maladjusted children from all over France. It has a population of 400.

The former butcher had fallen ill and, as he was the last in the village, the Mayor of the Commune looked around for a replacement. He came across an unemployed youth, the son of a butcher from a neighbouring village. With the help of funds from the Department of Agriculture and the Region, and following a short market research exercise by the Chamber, the Commune

converted an old Town Hall garage in the centre of the village and fitted it out with the most up-to-date butcher's equipment. The children from the local school helped with the decoration.

The baker had bought out the commercial rights of the old village baker and set up on new premises, again with the help of the Commune and the DDA. He was paying a rental of about £160 per month representing the interest on the loan for that part of the cost not grant aided. He had the right to outright purchase when the interest was paid.

The Mayor reckoned that by taking action on these two cases he had prevented the village crossing a threshold of decline from which it would never recover. It is action on this micro scale which is increasingly attracting the attention of the economic planners at Regional and State level but it is a level which has been long overlooked.

Fifteen minutes drive from Chambon in the town of Langogne (pop. 3,800), I visited the remains of one of the failures of the mid-seventies approach to rural development. A large area of land had been bought, laid out and serviced by SOMIVAL, a "mixed society" charged with implementing the Plan for the Massif Central. The project had fallen through for complex political reasons but the land had been converted into an industrial estate. SOMIVAL had built an advance factory and, with the help of state grants, a local vehicle repair depot had been set up. The rest of the estate was still empty after eight years but the area adjacent to the estate was being built upon using the estate roads because the Commune had never got around to producing a land use plan to control development.

On the other side of the Departement, in the Cévennes, lies the small town of Meyrueis (pop. 900). The Mayor received a telephone call in August 1980 from the Lozère Economic Expansion Committee. They had been contacted by an industrialist who liked the Cévennes and wanted to set up a brush factory which he could visit on his regular drive across the mountains between his main factories in Limoges and Marseilles. The Commune was part of a local village grouping known as a SIVOM. The Mayor contacted the other Mayors of the group and by mid-afternoon a site had been found. The Prefect called a special meeting of the service Departments and, after several hours, the necessary grants were approved, the

services were agreed upon and the planning permission granted. The Communal Syndicate delegated the task of construction to SOMIVAL, a state sponsored "mixed economy society".

Not all Communes respond so rapidly but gradually small businesses are installing themselves in the mountains with the help of grants, loans and advice from the public authorities and the Chambers - a communal timber drying plant assisted by FIDAR, the rural development fund, the Region and the Departement - a silk weaving workshop assisted by the DDA and the Lower Rhone Company (CMARBRC) - and so on.

The examples are many, but each situation seems to bring together a different set of actors, a different development formula, a different set of circumstances and the actual pattern of the rural development process and the institutions involved is difficult to unravel. The next three sections of this chapter concentrate on these institutions, their origin and their "raison d'être", on the changing pattern of assistance made available to firms setting up a small business, and on the financial mechanisms which link the institutions. The chapter deliberately concentrates on the formal side of the development process but it should be kept in mind that there are hundreds of young "nouveaux installes" particularly in the Cévennes who contribute in their own way to the local economy but most of whom would never go near a Government official if they could help it. I did gain the impression, however, that more and more of these people in search of an alternative economy are beginning to turn for help towards the system which they had come from the mountains to escape. Some, in fact, have become part of the system, taking on the job of mayor or councillor and representing the interests of the local tradesmen and farmers.

5.2 The institutions behind the initiatives

Some of the agents in the development process have already been referred to in the previous section but the relationships between them are complex and constantly changing particularly as the Mitterand policies begin to take effect. In addition, the number of organisations is often greater than the number of people who run them, a local "notable" accumulating posts in a range of apparently competing organisations.

President Mitterand has speeded up the process of decentralisation which had been making slow but steady progress under the previous two administrations. A greater degree of financial autonomy is now given to the Regions and the Départements subject to planning agreements established with the state. Both lower tier authorities now have funds set aside for economic development purposes and are looking around for ways of exercising their new-found powers. The old style Prefects remain in office as legal guardians but have been shifted out of the political limelight. The former system of grand scale regional planning with DATAR as the fountain of all wisdom and wealth is slowly being allowed to take a back seat although contracts established under the old system are still being implemented and DATAR is adapting its function to the new circumstances. Officially, the process is away from the "parachuting" of aid packages out of the DATAR plane, and towards "self development" projects on the ground backed by a network of planning agreements. Nevertheless, in Lozère at any rate, the new system has not yet made much impact and the packages are still arriving.

DATAR now has a number of local outposts and development agencies in the provinces. There are two which concern Lozère - the Association for the Industrial Promotion of Languedoc-Roussillon (APRLR) and the Association for the Industrial Development of the Massif Central (ADIMAC). Lozère falls happily into both geographical categories. ADIMAC was established to implement the economic objectives of the 1975 Plan for the Massif Central and some of the measures which it has at its disposal are considered in the following section. APRLR is more concerned with the attraction of inward investors and with introducing them to local communes and expansion committees. The organisation was formed in 1969 but attracted financial support from DATAR in 1979. The following year it had entrusted to it the official industrial development agency of the new Region of Languedoc-Roussillon. The organisation takes the form of a non-profit making body (association Loi 1901) comprising 125 members, 59 from industry, 19 from local government, 17 from the banking organisations, 4 from the economic expansion committees and the remaining 26 from chambers of commerce, chambers of agriculture and other professional organisations. Only two projects have so far been attracted to Lozère and the bulk are concentrated on the big industrial estates around the main cities of Montpellier

and Perpignan. Although APRILR is an agent of the Regional Council it is still heavily dependent on DATAR for technical and financial support and on many of the "notables" of the area for policy guidance.

Regional Councils have had their status altered under the Mitterand reforms from "établissements publics" to directly elected "collectivités territoriales" and now have executive powers in the fields of economic development and planning. They have, however, few members of staff and are dependent upon planning agreements with the state and the départements. In 1983, the two members of Languedoc-Roussillon's planning department drew up a multi-million franc Plan for the Region and this has now been jointly signed by senior Regional and Government officials. It was apparent, however, that for the Montpellier planners Lozère was a remote and little known corner of their Region and "mountain policy" was well down the list of priorities established for a dynamic and rapidly growing region bent on transforming its major industries to cope with the revolution in high technology and with a surplus of cheap local wine threatened by Italian competition. This was also a fear shared by local people who were more suspicious of a remote regional authority with devolved powers than they were of a remote national administration.

Départements have also assumed executive powers and have gained both functions and control over some bureaucratic resources but they are still dependent on the local outposts of Government service departments (eg, Agriculture or Equipment) and these are more than ever under the direct control of the Prefect.

As noted in Chapter III, the local outpost of the Ministry of Agriculture (the DDA) is more directly concerned with rural development projects than other state bodies and has helped communes to realise a number of small workshops and factories. The National Park is also an outpost of State authority and it too has assisted in securing funds for local development projects within its boundaries, the most notable being yet another baker's shop in the Cévennes, this time assisted by funds from the Ministry of Commerce and Small Business. It is the task of the Préfecture to ensure that there is no overlapping of grant aid on any particular project and this is carried out through a special service of Coordination and Economic Action (SCAE).

Before turning to the role of the Communes and the local elected representatives, a brief note is required as to the role played by two types of organisation which have no real equivalent in the UK.

The Mixed Economy Societies have their origin in decrees of 1925 and 1955. Funded partly by Government grant and partly by Local Authority investment, these non-profit making companies are charged with the economic development of particular areas or particular sectors of the local economy. Often they tend to enlarge their sphere of interest beyond their original remit.

Thus the Company of the Lower Rhone and Languedoc (CNABRL) was originally set up to develop a regional water supply system but is more and more becoming involved in tourist, forestry and small scale industrial projects partly with the proceeds from the sale of water. SOMIVAL, the Society for the Development of Auvergne-Limousin, was set up in 1964 to develop the tourist and agricultural economy of the central Massif Central but has progressively moved its attentions south towards the Cevennes. SOMIVAL intervenes in the local economy either through public bodies such as the Agriculture Department and the National Savings Bank or through private bodies such as the Funds of the Federation of Hoteliers or the Camping and Caravanning organisations. Communes which until recently have had neither the resources nor the powers to build for example, an advance factory would call upon the resources and professional expertise of SOMIVAL to intervene on their behalf as "maitre d'ouvrage" or undertaking agent.

Mixed economy societies have also been set up at the Departmental level and the Equipment Society of Lozere (SELO) has been responsible for implementing a number of projects including a local Safari Park.

The roles played by the Chambers of Industry and Commerce and the Chamber of Tradesmen and Small Businessmen are much more active than bodies bearing similar names in this country, and they can not really be seen as equivalents in anything other than the representational sense.

They have, for a start, far greater resources, being able to levy both a professional and an "additional" tax as well as having access to long term loans and Government grants for projects such as airports and

industrial estates. They run training schools, build houses for rent and give advice to businesses with the help of permanent qualified staff. Unfortunately for Lozère the lack of large scale industry means that the local Chamber of Industry has a low taxation base and is not particularly dynamic. Despite having built an airport some years ago they were unable to guarantee its regular use and the scheduled flights have now ended.

The Chamber of Tradesmen and Small Businessmen ("Métiers") is much more active with over 5,000 tradesmen in Lozère subscribing and has become involved in setting up a number of small industrial estates and advance factories. Small Businessmen once again fell into favour under the Raymond Barre planning of the late seventies and a number of incentives are now open to them which were previously beyond their reach.

The Chambers are a powerful force on the economic scene and rival the Local Authorities in many respects. They have the staff, the expertise, and the resources which the communes have long been denied and in many cases they (along with the Mixed Economy Societies) have filled a vacuum left by a weak and impoverished local Government structure hemmed in by central government restrictions on its appropriate spheres of competence.

This balance of power has, however, shifted slightly in favour of the Communes since the Decentralisation Law of 1982. Indeed, many have anticipated the change in legislation for some years and have pushed the old legislation to its limit and beyond. For the first time since the Revolution they now have the formal power to take measures "necessary to the protection of the social and economic interests of the population", the only prohibition being on the taking of shares in commercial concerns.

Although the pre-revolutionary communes had substantial economic powers, these were severely circumscribed after the Revolution in the defence of free trade and free enterprise. The powers have waxed and waned over the years with municipal intervention being at its greatest in time of war or national emergency or in specific cases where left wing authorities have experimented with municipal socialism but they were always subsequently curtailed by National Government or the French Supreme Court (Conseil d'Etat).

In practice, the regulations have in the past prevented

local communes from, for example, building advance factories, and they have had to delegate the task to Mixed Societies or the Consular Chambers. This situation formally came to an end when Gaston Defferre, the socialist Mayor of Marseilles, was appointed Minister of the Interior and of Decentralisation in 1981.

Most Départements now have an Expansion Committee which attempts to pool the resources of the various development agents within the département. The Committee often employs a development agent itself and Lozère happens to have a young and particularly energetic ex-company director (he was the first point of contact for the brush manufacturer mentioned in the previous section).

Grass roots organisations in the form of associations (Loi de 1901) have sprung up all over Lozère in recent years. Thus the "Association Cévenole" has been the instigator behind a small mushroom growing unit at Lasalle, while across the border in the Gard the Association des Deux Vallées has helped restore an old mill and has gone on to encourage other cooperative ventures in the area, notably the aromatic plant workshop in Rimes. These are both financed partly by the Ministry of Agriculture and partly by FIDAR but the initial driving force came from the associations themselves. The chestnut purée factory mentioned in the last section was also the result of an initiative by a non-profit making organisation as was the timber drying plant and the silk weaving workshop. Even in the field of building renovation these organisations are coming to the fore. The "Planning and Architectural Aid Workshop" has done much to help restore the centres of the ancient town of Florac and St. André de Valborgne. (Housing renovation is beyond the scope of this chapter but has contributed much to the "Cévenole Revival".)

Finally, the actors in the drama who probably do more than any other group to spark off economic initiatives are the elected representatives - hundreds of them scattered throughout the 185 communes and 24 cantons of Lozère. Occasionally, they have an "animateur économique" at their disposal paid for either by a group of communes or by DATAR within the context of the Plan for the Greater South West. These have given market research advice to a number of small businesses over the past few years and one in particular has been responsible for setting up a Centre for Alternative Energy on the Welsh model, as well as a workshop in an old gendarmerie in Bessèges also in the Gard.

Although in a small village the Mayor may have little power or resources at his disposal, he is still an influential figure and often the person to whom the locals turn when in difficulty or when they are seeking the assistance of some Government Department. He is also often noted for his ability to play one department off against another and this is an important skill when, for example, he is attempting to install an advance factory with no resources of his own.

.5.3 Assistance available for economic development in Lozère

On paper at any rate Lozère is probably the best assisted Département in France. Aid is available for a range of different sized firms and this section does not intend to be comprehensive but to indicate the main trends in Government policy. Given the weak structure of local government, it is also important to establish the resources which the Communes can draw upon with respect to economic development projects and Section 4 examines this in greater detail.

Private investment agencies known as Sociétés de Développement Régional or SDR are important in supplementing the main banks particularly in the field of medium and long term loans. Originally created in 1955 they were intended to drain savings from the Local Authorities and channel them into local private investment activity. There are two bodies operating in Lozère - SOFIMAC and SODLER. Their capital holding in any particular firm is always less than 35% and always for a limited time period. Since 1976, the State has underwritten 50% of their participation in new firms and 25% in existing firms. The new Regional Authorities now also have the right to participate in these agencies and discussions are currently underway to create an all-embracing Regional investment agency to be known as SORIDEC embracing the activities of SODLER, the economic resources of the five Départements which comprise the Region, the Region itself and a range of other financial institutions.

Direct State economic assistance is administered by DATAR. The main pattern of Regional Development Assistance was laid down in 1976, although assistance with geographic mobility (the "Primette") had been available since 1964. The major grants were the

Regional Development Grant (PDR), the Grant for the Relocation of Tertiary Activities (PLAT) and the Grant for the Location of Research Activities (PLCAR). All these grants were paid on the basis of job creation and although special exemptions were made for disadvantaged areas such as Lozère their effect was not dramatic. This was partly because, even in a commune with less than 15,000 inhabitants in a mountain area, a new implantation had to create six jobs within three years and partly because the mountain zone was extended under political pressure to the suburbs of the thriving lowland cities of Nîmes and Montpellier thus nullifying the effect as far as the mountain regions were concerned. Recently, these grants have been superseded by the Regional Employment Grant.

More significant for upland areas has been the Special Rural Aid (ASR) also instituted in 1976 and designed to assist all types of small business in whatever sector provided that they create at least one permanent job. The aid was confined to areas which were "demographically fragile" and this included most of Lozère's upland areas. An equivalent of £1,800 is made available for each new employee, part time, full time or family, up to the first ten employees and from then on at a degressive rate up to 30 employees. The Besson Report reckons that 2,000 jobs were created by means of this particular measure up to 1982. This is a national figure, however, and I could only identify four newly created small companies in Lozère attracted by the full range of grants available. Two of these were in the electronics sector and their other two (perfume manufacture and engine reconditioning) had subsequently altered their original plans. Most new jobs are created when existing small businesses expand at some key moment in their business cycle. (Ninety-five percent of small businesses on new industrial estates in Lozère are indigenous transfers from the neighbouring village.)

A special form of aid was created in 1976 for small business development (the PDA) within the area covered by the Massif Central Plan. It was limited to an equivalent of £2,000 per employee (minimum of 3) and 25% of all forms of investment up to £14,000. It was followed up in 1979 by the Small Business Installation Grant (PIA) oriented towards the transfer of new installation of businesses within the rural areas with special concessions for the Massif Central. It is an investment grant on a sliding scale based on capital costs rather than an employment grant and can be added to the Special Rural Aid. The Besson Report suggests a fixed rate of 18% limited to upland areas only.

There are now Regional Grants in addition to state aid but in the case of Languedoc-Roussillon the threshold is 6 employees created and thus too high for many rural businesses to benefit.

Reforms to the Regional Aid System were carried out in 1981 and much greater emphasis will in future be put upon Regional Authorities devising their own schemes of priorities within a framework laid down by the state. This is particularly the case with the Regional Employment Grant (PAR) which is now extremely flexible and will vary greatly from region to region.

The new Planning Grant (PAT) raises substantially the grant per job created and is jointly administered by State and Region. It also, however, raises the lower threshold limit on jobs created and is, therefore, even less applicable to mountain areas than its predecessor. Special Rural Aid, however, still remains under the new system and will be administered by the Region with special help from the Government.

DATAR has in recent years moved progressively away from regional policy and towards the assistance of special critical sectors of the economy. This has left the three tiers of local government to devise planning strategies for their own territorial areas based upon their new resources and increased powers. This transitional period is still fluid with measures laid down under the last Government still in vogue, but the following section sets out to examine the resources currently available to one particular level of local government, the communes, to carry out one particular type of economic activity, the building of so-called "welcome workshops" or "atelier d'accueil". These are small workshops with houses attached reserved in the current experiments for small business activities which are independent of the local market. It is action at this level and with this scale of project which seems to hold out most hope for the scattered communities in a remote upland area.

5.4 Inter-authority relationships: the case of the "Atelier d'Accueil"

Although a commune now has greater powers of intervention than hitherto, its resources are still meagre. It increases its call on outside finance by grouping together with other communes to create a syndicate or SIVOM. The communes have not yet had the opportunity to exercise their new powers but the intention is for

groups of communes to get together in order to draw up an intercommunal charter setting out together the budgetary programmes of all levels of government for their particular territorial unit. The programme would be established by means of a process of iteration, between the levels of Government.

The forerunner of this charter was the "contrat de pays" established in 1975 and originally intended to last for 5 years. These had the object of pulling together a number of contiguous communes, either for a specific purpose or for a range of purposes. The system was relaunched in 1980 with a greater degree of devolution to the Regions and the support of FIDAR funds. The 1980 realignment of policy was designed to concentrate funds on specific projects which would either create employment or give added value to local production.

Thus both the "contrat de pays" and the intercommunal charter have a dual function. The first is the reform of local government in rural areas by allowing groups of communes to come together to sort out their joint infrastructural problems and the second is to devise a planning framework for economic initiatives designed to stimulate growth where possible and stabilise population.

This "laissez faire" approach to local government reform has led to a complex pattern of political compromise but any move towards a UK type system would detract from the authority of the Mayor's vis a vis the Administration and the Consular Chambers. It would also probably mean an erosion of the power wielded by the Chambers themselves and this would be fiercely resisted. The current set of compromises is therefore likely to last for some time and the reforms are in any case often a formal acceptance of an informal system which has been in operation for some years. A brief description of its operation procedure is therefore justified.

A commune or group of communes which wishes to mount a particular project has for some years been able to secure assistance from the three levels of government - the Departement, the Region and the State. How large a percentage of the total costs it manages to achieve is partly a matter of skill and partly of luck. Assistance is not widely publicised in Lozère and even some senior officials were unaware about the full range of incentives available.

The Department of Agriculture will for instance assist a commune to build or restore a communal gîte for craftsmen. The subsidy is usually 30-45% of the capital costs and also opens up the possibility of low interest loans from the Credit Agricole. The craftsman must be known by the Local Chamber of Tradesmen and Small Businessmen and must carry out an economic feasibility study. The rental is based upon the annual loan repayments.

Under the Massif Central Plan the communes can avail themselves of a 25% grant towards the total costs of either a craft or a larger industrial enterprise. The undertaking agent is SOMIVAL and the project is mounted with the technical assistance of the Commissariat for the Industrial Development of the Massif Central and ADIMAC. This was the procedure adopted to build and furnish the brush factory in Meyrueis.

The Ministry of Commerce and Small Businesses has been running two experimental schemes for some years. The first consists of 25% grants towards "atelier - relais" or workshops which must be vacated within two years to make way for a new occupant. The second involves a similar level of assistance towards "atelier d'accueil" which are sold to the occupant after a two year trial period. There are various conditions laid down by the Ministry including one that the installations must fit into a local plan and that the total level of aid when added to aid from other sources does not exceed 50%. Most advance workshop schemes make some use of this category of aid but it is not widely publicised.

A less frequently used source of assistance for obvious reasons is the urban planning fund. This accords a relatively high rate of grant (35%-50%), but must be associated with an overall redevelopment project. I only came across one project in the Gard (Monoblet) which had used this source of finance which is subject to much administrative delay.

FIDAR, the Interministerial Fund for Rural Action and Development as noted in Chapter III was instituted in 1979 for fragile rural areas. It pulled together a number of existing rural funds and has steadily increased the amount of aid disbursed annually since it was created.

FIDAR now partially funds the old Massif Central Plan as well as the plan for the peripheral zone of the

Cévennes National Park. Projects are selected by the Massif Central Commissaire and relayed to Paris for verification. In comparison to its predecessors, however, (Rural Renovation Fund, Rural Action Fund) it is relatively flexible and delays by French standards are not inordinate. There is no upper limit on aid and each case is treated on its merits. All legally constituted groupings of individuals can benefit and not simply communes. Most of the craft workshops and small advance factories in Lozère have some FIDAR money as part of the total package. Thus an old spinning mill was converted in St. André de Valborge with grants deriving from FIDAR as well as the Region and the Ministry of Commerce and Small Businesses. (The development officer employed to attract industry for a neighbouring SIVOM contacted an entrepreneur who set up a workshop for making pub and restaurant tables.)

FIDAR was given added emphasis in the discussions leading to the 9th National Plan and in the State-Regional Planning Contracts which followed during 1984 and 1985.

The initial 5-year budget for fragile rural areas set out in April 1984 at an Interministerial Meeting chaired by the Prime Minister was as follows:-

	FIDAR	Other State Credits	Regional Contributions
Mountain Areas	£110M	£88M	£76M
Other fragile areas	<u>£38M</u>	<u>£14M</u>	<u>£42M</u>
	£148M	£102M	£118M

These are sums in addition to the normal block and sectoral allocations channelled down to the communes but comparisons with this country are difficult as in Scotland a certain percentage of these rural projects would be financed by the Local Authorities drawing on local rate revenue and Government rate support grant. Others would receive assistance from the Scottish Tourist Board or the SDA. Nevertheless, a block of finance set aside in this way within the context of a National Plan focusses attention on the problems of the upland areas and exhorts the regional authorities in particular to seek solutions within their overall planning.

In 1985, 56% of the Fund was devoted to projects in the farming and forestry sector, 18% to tourist projects, 13% to small business enterprises and the remainder to a wide variety of schemes from rural housing to improvement of television reception.

From 1980 to 1983 the Fund contributed about two-thirds of project costs with the remaining one third coming from other ministerial departments. With the advent of the State-Region Planning agreements, the FIDAR share has dropped to about 40% with the Regions contributing about 30%. Although some projects may be totally financed by public funds, the average public contribution towards a project in a fragile rural area is around 17%.

The final category of state assistance for the enterprising commune is the "Greater South West Plan" long to medium term loan. This Plan is backed by non-quota European Regional Development Fund finance and can be used by communes to build advance factories which they later sell to the occupants as well as a range of related economic initiatives. The scale of operation envisaged by these loans is, however, beyond the reach of most Lozère communal groups although one project did receive assistance while I was there. It was a loan of about £45,000 towards a shop in Lyons for displaying and marketing mountain produce. The DATAR team administering this programme is now turning its attention towards a number of pilot schemes which will be part of the Integrated Mediterranean Programme.

Since 1977 the Regions in their role of "établissement public" have had the right to create industrialisation funds. Policies have varied greatly from one Region to another. Languedoc-Roussillon has made grants available for advance factories which create more than 3 employees in communes with less than 15,000 inhabitants. There is a sliding scale of assistance from 80% in communes of less than 2,000 inhabitants up to 20% in those with between 10,000 and 15,000. This assistance can be added to other forms as in the case of the table workshop mentioned above. During 1984 and 1985, the Regions drew up joint planning agreements with the State which were designed to integrate Regional Plans with the 9th National Plan.

The General Council of the Département of Lozère itself operates a loan guarantee system through its own specially constituted Mixed Society (SELO) but is now in the process of abandoning the scheme in favour of an economic intervention fund.

Thus, for something even as comparatively simple as a craft workshop there can be more than half a dozen organisations involved. The number of possible variations is considerable but on average the cost is usually split three ways between the State, the Region and the undertaking agent (commune, chamber, etc.) along with the Département. In terms of total cost, FIDAR and the Ministry of Commerce and Small Businesses contribute the bulk of the State's portion although the Department of Agriculture probably has a larger number of small projects.

Other initiatives

The "atelier d'accueil" demonstrates that, even for a relatively inexpensive and straightforward operation, there can be many alternative solutions, as matters stand at present in Lozère. There have, however, been other types of economic development initiative affecting the small business.

The "gîte communal d'artisan" or small business installation with house attached was referred to in Section 1 of this chapter. These are reserved for essential village services such as the butcher and the baker in the examples given.

It could be argued, however, that a village plumber, joiner or builder is as essential in his own way to the future of the village, and the local "Chambre de Metiers" is making strong representations to the Region to have these benefits extended to other small businesses.

Small service trades seem to constitute the life-blood of Lozère. Forty-seven percent of these are part of the building trade, 15% repair, and 11% transport and services. The balance is split between manufacturing and processing. Whilst manufacturing and processing activities have been increasingly centralised outside the upland areas as a result of industrialisation and rationalisation, this has been more difficult to achieve with service activities. In addition, rural development initiatives to date have involved substantial building programmes - agricultural stock shelters, tourist accommodation, town centre renovation, etc. This has given a boost to the small building related trades, and has, in fact, been one of the main employment spinoffs.

Their needs for storage space have increased and communes have been begun to experiment with the creation of mini industrial estates and rental storage accommodation. Difficulties encountered include lack of land and insufficient funds. I came across one group of recently built storage sheds perched on a bleak and windswept hillside at Chateauneuf, the highest commune in France. So far a garage operator had taken up a storage rental but even a rent of £18 per month seemed excessive to many locals. Another scheme down in the valley had attracted much more interest but the farmers were able to outbid the local small businessmen and used it for their tractors.

What the local Chamber is seeking is a Departmental small business development fund which would cover all categories of business including local service industries. Assistance would be given in the form of grants, loans and loan guarantees and would not be tied to the creation of new employment. Its success is to be secured by a resolution of the land shortage problem, with a land bank created by the communal groupings in every village possessing more than a certain number of small businessmen. The Chamber considers that this is an approach to rural development which has so far been overlooked (or underfinanced) in the range of measures available under the "mountain policy" heading but they admit that better publicising of existing measures would also have a significant impact.

Small scale food processors in Lozère have been badly hit by the modernisation of French agriculture over the past 20 years. The grants system and particularly the Agricultural Orientation Grant (POA) have favoured large scale implantations close to main centres of population (cf. FEODA grants in the UK). The grant is accorded to installations which create at least 15 jobs with a minimum investment of £28,000. This has conspired to drain many processing jobs out of rural areas and towards the towns. Recently, a so-called mini-POA has been devised in an attempt to redress the balance but there are fears that this measure is both too little and too late. It is, however, rather soon to judge whether Lozère's 300 or so small scale processors will avail themselves of the aid on offer.

Conclusion

There are many examples to be found in Lozère of successful small scale business ventures which have come into being with the aid of public finance. These are the result of a series of initiatives taken in the late seventies as part of the pro-uplands policy of the last Government. It is too early to judge the effect of recent moves towards further devolution of responsibility for economic initiatives but the Besson Report contains many new ideas.

Despite their special concessions for mountain areas the main regional development grants of the seventies were ill-suited to the scale of development in upland areas and their effect in Lozère at least has been minimal. Better adapted solutions such as the Special Rural Aid for fragile areas, the special Massif Central assistance for small artisans have made more of an impact but this has been blunted by the complexity of the local government system which is being allowed to reorganise itself rather than have reorganisation imposed from above as in this country. Institutions such as the Consular Chambers and the Mixed Societies which grew up to fill the vacuum left by the absence of strong local government are now competing with Communes in the field of economic development as communal groupings gain more power and resources.

It is difficult to distinguish genuine measures concerned with upland development from what might be seen as the exposed wiring circuitry of a resource allocation system hidden in the UK within the obscure formulae of the rate support grant. The chapter attempted to separate the pattern of individual incentives for particular firms in mountain areas from the pattern of incentives to communal groupings trying to attract or accommodate firms. The example of workshop units with living quarters attached was cited but other measures are in progress or planned and those concerned with the small scale service sector (numerically more important in Lozère than either manufacturing or processing) are of interest.

As for the future, much depends upon the attitude to rural development struck by the new Regional Authorities. The peripheral nature of Lozère psychologically, politically and geographically vis a vis its own Region may not appear to be a good omen but it may well throw the Département back upon its own resources and arrest a spirit of dependence which grew up under the

centralist administration of the past. The key relationships under these circumstances will be between, on the one hand the Communes and the Départemental Council both with increased powers, and on the other the outposts of Government. Of these latter, the Department of Agriculture is likely to have its rural development position strengthened under the overall control of the Prefect. A key factor will, therefore, be the kind of working relationships which these "fonctionnaires" can strike up with the many Departmental organisations involved in the rural development process. Where will their loyalties lie?

Another key body will be DATAR. How will a body which is "dirigiste" by its very nature adapt to a decentralised system and what use will be made of FIDAR, its all-purpose rural fund?

The communes have been allowed to persist despite strong arguments to install a UK type District system. This is very much due to the practice known as "cumul de mandats" whereby a mayor may hold a number of additional offices including Minister of State. The legislation to curb this practice has been delayed, perhaps due to vested interest and perhaps due also to the fact that the practice has the effect of welding together an otherwise fragmented local government system. Any move towards a UK type of system would mean that mayors would be reduced to the status of community councillors and this could well dampen grass roots initiatives.

The diffuse nature of France's local government structure and the sheer number of new measures introduced since 1975 has encouraged the proliferation of organisations concerned with small business development in upland areas. As a result well intended policies directed down from the top have often been dissipated in a confusion of overlapping responsibilities.

The main source of ideas and enthusiasm seems to have come from the grass roots, from the communal elected representatives, from the non-profit making associations and from individual entrepreneurs. Some appear to be hampered by insufficient information or a lack of understanding as to how the system works. Others have devised ingenious solutions in spite of the administrative obstacles.

All the ingredients appear to be present for a successful "politique de la montagne" with respect to small businesses in Lozere but a key test of the new devolved

pattern of government and economic responsibility will be whether the the development measures emanating from above can be integrated with the enthusiasm from below.

VI THE ROLE OF TOURISM AS A SUPPLEMENT TO FARM INCOME IN LOZERE

Chapter III made the distinction between policies designed to develop the farm economy and those designed to compensate farmers for natural handicaps. Farm-based tourism appears to offer a middle course. By enabling the farm income to grow through economic diversification rather than intensification it would appear to have the potential to maintain farm incomes without significantly reducing the number of farms able to secure a reasonable living from a given area of land. It also draws the farmer into a market where demand, potentially at any rate, is extremely elastic - that is to say, capable of growth in line with economic expansion, as opposed to demand for food which is notoriously inelastic in this respect.

Whatever mechanisms develop to prevent overproduction in European agriculture, it is likely to be the upland farmer who suffers first. Soil, climate and altitude conspire to prevent him diversifying into large scale cash crop production or towards energy-intensive rearing systems. His only alternatives would appear to be to get out of farming altogether and allow a neighbouring farm to take over, thus further reducing the upland population, or to stay and diversify into a non-agricultural but farm-based activity. Farm-based tourism appears to offer one opportunity for diversification.

The potential of upland areas for tourism has long been recognised both in this country and in France but much of the investment has gone into large-scale projects using outside capital and material resources. Whilst these undoubtedly have some impact on local economies, by providing seasonal or part-time jobs, much of their revenue leaks away either in the form of profits to outside owners or wages to seasonally imported staff.

In common with many other upland areas of France, Lozère benefited from a small Government-assisted ski station in the 1960's. This has, however, had to compete with much better equipped ski stations in the classic ski resorts of the Alps and has not been a notable economic success. In contrast, there are many small farm enterprises which, through their own efforts or in conjunction with a collective body, have made a substantial impact on the local economy irrespective of any ancillary effect on farm income. The spin-off for the building trade has already been referred to

but the impact on small retailers, craft manufacturers, etc., is also significant according to studies carried out by the DDA.

This chapter seeks to identify the different forms of farm-based tourism which have sprung up in Lozère and to examine more closely their institutional base and the developing pattern of Government incentives since the War. It also takes a look at recent developments in tourism which may not yet have had much impact but are pointers to future developments.

By limiting the assessment to farm-based tourism, the chapter ignores the fields of hotel development and the second home movements, both of which have important economic effects. It would have been particularly interesting to have compared the balance of state resources directed towards the hotel industry as opposed to the farm-based aspect of tourism in both France and the UK but this would require a specialist study.

6.1 The different types of farm-based tourism

The term "farm cottage" is not entirely appropriate for the French "gîtes ruraux" as those can range from reconditioned outbuildings to purpose-built dwellings. The word "gîte" has now become familiar to most British tourists as a rural holiday home which comes up to a recognised standard of comfort.

Two forms of gîte can be distinguished in Lozère - private rural gîtes and SICA gîtes.

Around six hundred gîtes have been established since 1955 in Lozère. Some of these have fallen out of tourist use and some are now run by non-farmers but the 1980 census indicated that two hundred and fifty farmers still run this kind of accommodation mainly in the summer months.

The SICA gîtes are a more recent development. There are one hundred and thirty-five of these units which are normally designed to a higher standard with professional assistance to restore traditional designs and materials in older farm buildings.

In addition to the gîtes, there are farmers who offer regulated bed and breakfast type accommodation, others who specialise in serving farm meals and some whose activities are confined to the provision of camping

sites or who sell farm produce to tourists - meat products in Margeride and mainly fruit and vegetable products in the Cévennes. There are those who are moving out from this particular line into more organised farm-based retailing.

6.2 The pattern of assistance for farm tourism in Lozère

Assistance for the construction or rehabilitation of gîtes is dependent on the farmer meeting a certain standard and the accommodation being available for three months each year for a period of 10 years following the granting of assistance. Since 1955 State aid has gradually expanded to include non-farming rural dwellers, to increase the rate of assistance in mountain areas and to increase the range of material assisted (camping sites, etc.). Although there are exceptions, the current rate of assistance for private gîtes in Lozère is 33% of capital costs with a ceiling of around £2,100 per gîte. This is not particularly attractive compared to what is on offer from, for example, the Scottish Tourist Board, but a much higher rate of assistance can be secured for SICA gîtes because of the special legal significance of a SICA association.

There are three SICA associations in Lozère: SICA Margeride-Aubrac offers a rate of 40% of capital costs without any ceiling, SICA Causses Cévennes offers the full legal maximum of 50% with a ceiling of £12,000 and SICA Parc offers a special rate of 80% and a ceiling of £13,000 because of the National Park's special legal status. Low interest loans are available for the balance from the Credit Agricole.

The SICA's are playing an increasingly important role in channelling aid to farmers. The setting up of a collectivity of this nature means that the group of farmers has access to whatever grants and loans are available to a Local Authority. It was a Rural Management Plan carried out in 1973 by SAFER and the DDA which first put forward the SICA formula as a way of both increasing levels of aid available and of integrating individual action with that of the public bodies. The SICA takes upon itself the status of "undertaking body" or "maitre d'ouvrage" and thus has direct call on Department of Agriculture funds as well as being able to enter into joint tender agreements with contractors.

The Méjan Association based on the Causses plateau belongs to another type of grouping. Created in 1970 out of an Agricultural Information Group, it had as its original aim the maximisation of economic returns to farmers from the limestone caves in the vicinity which attract about 170,000 tourists per year. The Association started out with bed and breakfast type projects and has now branched out into a permanent exhibition of the locality and its prehistory, cycling holidays and, more recently, a gliding centre. It also concerns itself with more agricultural activities such as the zoning of agriculture and forestry and the prevention of erosion as well as the permanent cultural and sporting needs of the local population.

The organisation responsible for overall standards (sanitation, heating, etc.) as well as fixed charges etc. is the local outpost of "Agriculture and Tourism", an association (Loi de 1901) founded by the farmers' own national representative bodies, despite an initial lack of enthusiasm towards farm-based tourism. A representative based in the Chamber of Agriculture gives information and technical assistance to farmers with tourism installations or to those who intend to set them up.

Finally, the organisation which acts as a direct link with the tourists and the travel agent is the Departmental Tourist Office concerned with all aspects of tourist promotion.

Recent research by the local Department of Agriculture has demonstrated that, despite the level of aid available, the gîte does not provide a significant supplement to the farm income. Its interest to the farmer lies more in the added value it brings to the farm property, providing a future house for a son, etc. It does, of course, also add to the value of the area as a tourist attraction as well as providing work for local tradesmen. The other forms of tourist activity employing less initial capital are more financially rewarding. This is particularly true of the farm-restaurant concept and the bed and breakfast type arrangement.

6.3 Recent developments in farm tourism

Over recent years, Lozère has witnessed the development of alternative forms of tourism which are more adapted to the farm's own work cycle and which open up new roles for the farmer and his wife, sometimes more challenging than hotelier or restaurateur.

One such experiment is the lodging of children in care who are referred to the farm by urban social work departments. The Young Farmers' Wives Club organises the venture and is paid at a rate of around £10 per child per day for two children over a two-month period. This is a particularly attractive proposition for the young farmer and his wife as it not only brings in extra revenue but provides a focus for social activity in communities which are often dispersed. The organisations involved are currently seeking EEC support for the project.

Although the downhill skiing station in Lozère is not thriving, cross-country skiing has made a big impact on the area in recent years. The Union of Outdoor Activity Centres (UCPA) has a State-assisted hostel on Mount Lozère. This has courses for hill walkers in summer and cross-country skiers in winter. These are directed to recognised circuits and either eat or spend the night in farms along the way. The winter revenue is particularly important for farms because this is when farm activity is at a low ebb and when the number of tourists is normally at its lowest point.

Groups of farmers are beginning to set up their own Associations. Support courses are available to give mountain guide training. Thus the Associations of Economic Development and Tourism (ADET) organises a number of winter holidays with farmers as course instructors as well as providers of food and lodgings. Another similar Association of nine families lodges and trains over 100 persons per winter, sharing the work and the revenue which currently amounts to over £1,000 per family in an average season. As on the courses, these winter activities often become the trigger for other non-tourist related projects such as the provision of group sheds or communal forest zoning plans.

Within and around the National Park, farmers have been playing an increasing role in recent years as auxiliary instructors for the Ministry of Agriculture's Training Centre. They have been drawn more and more into the field of environmental education with the help of courses for mountain guides. It is the belief of officials in the Department of Agriculture that this kind of activity will increase greatly in future years with special environmental courses being run for school children, retired persons, etc. They see the line between tourism and education becoming increasingly blurred in the years to come and the farmers taking a greater part both as hosts and as instructors.

Conclusion

There has clearly been a great effort to promote farm tourism in Lozère but the most obvious solutions whereby the farmer and his wife turn their hands to the restaurant business or the hotel business are not always the most attractive to the farmer in view of the cycle of farm activities in the summer tourist period. Nor is the straightforward gîte necessarily the most lucrative given the current scale of assistance and the costs to be met (taxes, social security contributions, etc.) although it has an importance in other respects. The future for this type of activity appears to lie in developing activities which take place in the quieter winter period and in emphasising the farmer's role as guide and environmental instructor. This will, of course, depend very much upon the demand for this kind of education and upon the framework of National Policy within which it will operate.

What is remarkable in Lozère in comparison to this country is the degree to which farmers have formed groups to tackle ventures on a common basis. This is probably less due to their collective spirit than to the availability of substantial financial incentives for group activity. Once groups are formed for a particular project, they tend to take on a dynamism of their own and seek out new problems and opportunities.

VII THE LOZERE INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

7.1 The origins of the programme

In 1979 Lozère, along with the Western Isles and part of the Belgian Ardennes, was chosen to take part in an experimental programme designed to pull together within one geographical area the three main structural funds of the EEC - the Social Fund (ESF) concerned mainly with vocational training and retraining, the Regional Development Fund (ERDF) concerned with industrial and infrastructure development and the Agricultural Fund (FEOGA) which, in addition to market support, is concerned with farm structural improvement and compensatory aid to Less Favoured Areas. Since the 1975 Less Favoured Areas Directive, EEC Commission policy had been moving in two main directions - towards greater integration of its funds and towards greater geographical concentration.

Lozère was chosen partly because of the poorly developed nature of its non-agricultural sector, partly because of the deep seated structural problems in farming itself and partly because it was thought that the diversity of the small Département would enable conclusions to be drawn relevant to a range of different types of mountain and upland economy. A prominent local politician with close Presidential links was also a relevant factor.

The main thrust of the programme was very much in accord with French Rural and Mountain Policy as it had developed since the late sixties, supported by a battery of measures, few with any real equivalent in the UK.

The Lozère IDP is the latest in a series of specific measures which have been devised by the French Government in conjunction with the EEC's agricultural fund, FEOGA. The first, approved in 1978 was for the supply of drinking water, rural roads and electrification to the Languedoc-Roussillon Region of which Lozère is a part. A year later, another programme was approved for the development of the Mediterranean forest resources and a further programme for the so-called "dry mountain areas" is in train. These also include Lozère within their geographical scope.

7.2 The financial basis of IDP

In 1981 special funds were approved for the agricultural component of the programme. The financial format was broadly the same as that devised for the rural infrastructure and forestry programmes - that is, a 5-year plan with a fixed input of FEOGA money (£8,000,000) representing 40% of the total public investment of £20,000,000. This did not include the ERDF and ESF components.

The Regional Development Fund component did not receive a special allocation but was to be treated as part of a wider ongoing programme for the Greater South West Region instituted in 1980 as a compensatory mechanism designed to buffer the region against the full impact of Spain's forthcoming accession to the EEC. The finance for this programme was drawn not from the national ERDF quotas but from a special non-quota section set up among other things to offset the unintended harmful consequences of particular EEC policies. The fact that there was no specifically Lozère portion has proved to be a major source of frustration and disappointment particularly to the business community in Lozère. The rules and regulations governing non-quota financial projects were drawn up for Local Authorities excluding Mixed Societies and Chambers. Also the fact that the non-quota finance had to be spread by DATAR officials among three Regions comprising 18 separate Départements meant that pressures to devote the Funds to major industrial restructuring in urban areas has in practice taken precedence over the needs of what is seen as an economically rural area with few politicians having any great affinity with the current Government.

The Social Fund backed training measures are funded in the orthodox way and no special privileges appear to be accorded to proposed schemes other than the fact that they are given priority status along with other Development Areas.

7.3 Programme objectives

The document submitted to the Commission in 1981 contained a detailed set of objectives accompanied by a number of specific measures listed under the three main programme headings - FEOGA, ERDF and ESF. There was an attempt to integrate the new IDP with projects from other EEC programmes already in operation.

Highest on the agenda was the question of communications. Lozère has always suffered from isolation particularly in winter. Only 4% of the overall programme cost was set aside for this because of other ongoing EEC schemes within the Département, most notably the three year Languedoc-Roussillon FEOGA programme referred to above.

The major part of the programme was to be devoted to agricultural development (55%), building on an existing small scale EEC programme. Primary processing facilities such as abattoirs were already installed with FEOGA assistance and the emphasis in the IDP was to be on secondary processing - meat products, cheese, etc.

A forestry development programme was also to build upon the foundations of a previous EEC scheme. A range of projects including access improvement and wood processing facilities were to absorb 15% of the IDP finance.

The objective of diversifying economic activity put an emphasis on apprenticeship training in the early years of the programme. Later it was envisaged that funds be set aside for the development of an electronics industry. The total cost under this heading was to amount to 8% of total project costs.

Finally, 18% of costs were to be devoted to tourist development. In previous years, capital was spent on developing large scale projects such as ski stations. This time the emphasis was to be on widespread but small scale sites and bed and breakfast type accommodation.

7.4 Specific measures

The range and scope of the IDP as originally envisaged can be gained from an examination of the sub-programme headings set out in the document submitted to the Commission in 1981.

A Agricultural Schemes (FEOGA)

	Responsible body
1. Land Management	
1.1 Land improvement by drainage and clearance	- Land Improvement Association (ASTAF)
1.2 Pasture Improvement	- Individual farmers
2. Land Assembly	
2.1 Individual operation	- Agriculture Dept. (DDA)
2.2 Communal operations	- Communal Land Associations
3. Adaptation and Promotion of the Structure of Livestock Rearing	
3.1 Farm Improvement Plan	- Individual farmers
3.2 Technical Back-up Contract	- Chamber of Agriculture
3.3 Technical Training Programme	- Chamber of Agriculture
4. Chestnut Plantation Development Plan	
4.1 Timber Production	- Individual owners
4.2 Chestnut Production	- Producers Federation
4.3 Improvement of grazing under the trees	- ASTAF
5. Winter Isolation Programme	
Rural Roads and electrification schemes	- Electricity Board
6. Forest Clearance	- Individual owners

A Industrial, Commercial & Small Business Schemes (ERDF)

1. Development of Food Industry

- 1.1 Local production of dairy products
- 1.2 Meat processing
- 1.3 Processing of gathered products (lichens, mushrooms, etc.)
- 1.4 Modernisation of existing industry

2. Wood Sector

- 2.1 Technical support
- 2.2 Sawmill improvement plan
- 2.3 Timber processing centre
- 2.4 Woodchip plant (heating)
- 2.5 Road construction

3. Development of Electronics Sector

4. Development of Local Industrial Structure

- 4.1 Advance factory construction

5. Creation of Small Specialised Estates (wood, electronics, primary processing)

6. Common Services for Small Businesses

- 6.1 Documentation centre
- 6.2 Improvement of information

7. Development of Small Business and Craft Sector

- 7.1 Construction of craft workshops
- 7.2 Development of support system
- 7.3 Placing of technical support officers throughout the Department

8. Improving the Prospects of Traditional Crafts
(Research into traditional technologies, wood, stone, wool)
 9. Local Energy
(Study of energy potential)
 10. Development of Camping and Caravanning
 11. Improvement of Hotel Infrastructure
 12. Development of Small Scale Scattered Tourist Accommodation
 13. Development of Sporting Infrastructure
 14. Support of Hillwalking Development
 15. Tourist Development
 16. Tourist Promotion
 17. Road Improvement
- C Training Schemes (ESF)
1. Training of Farmers
 - 1.1 Technical training
 - 1.2 General legal, social and economic training
 - 1.3 Management courses for farmers' wives
 2. Small Business Training
 - 2.1 Courses in setting up and managing a small business
 - 2.2 Courses in new techniques
 - 2.3 Information technology courses
 - 2.4 Management courses for wives
 - 2.5 Training in traditional crafts

3. Training Linked with Open Air Activities

- 3.1 Skiing
- 3.2 Hiking
- 3.3 Canoeing

7.5 Administration

In May 1982 immediately after formal consent had been given by Brussels to the overall project an IDP Association was formed. This was a legally constituted body consisting of the Regional Council, the Departmental Council and all the organisations affected by the proposed programmes. Administration was delegated to a special Council drawn from representatives of the Chambers of Commerce and Agriculture, the Traders Federation, the local and regional authorities, the electrification union, the Government body responsible for farm restructuring (ADASEA), the land assembly agency (SAFER), the Land Improvement Agency (ASTAF), the National Park Authority and the Local Tourist Board.

A special agricultural sub-committee was also set up including the main farmers' union (FDSEA), the young farmers' organisation (CDJA), the Credit Agricole and the Foresters' Union. The difficulties experienced with the ERDF side of the Programme have delayed the setting up of a similar working group to deal with commerce and industry. Taken together, these groups constitute the IDP Association.

Early publicity for the IDP raised over 1,200 applications from farmers. These come in by post, telephone or private visit to the IDP Office manned by the local SAFER agent. He immediately contacts the Chamber of Agriculture in the same building and a young farm adviser is sent out to check up on the request.

The Chamber's role is partly representative and partly advisory and is financed from a land tax, a product tax and by national grant aid. Three of its 40 farm advisers are paid for out of IDP funds. Most advisers live all year round in the outlying areas.

The adviser is dispatched to the farmer requesting assistance and a 3-year plan is drawn up indicating the effect of proposed land and livestock improvement, building needs, etc. This is in many ways a scaled

down version of the EEC-sponsored Development Plan adapted to the conditions and farm size of Lozère. Only 1% of all farms in Lozère were big enough to produce a Development Plan before the IDP was instituted.

Special advice is taken by the IDP Association on the different aspects of the proposed 3-year plan and it is passed on to the Department of Agriculture for formal administrative checking before crossing the final hurdle of the agricultural sub-committee (this usually calls for an economic study of any proposal incorporating new buildings).

It is claimed that it now takes only one month to process an application but delays were much longer in the early stages of the programme. By January 1984, 800 dossiers had been drawn up and around 600 approved. Once a dossier is approved, a contract is entered into whereby the farm adviser gives economic and technical backup advice over the 3-year period of the plan.

The ERDF schemes are far fewer in number and the administration less complex. As already noted, the industrial and commercial aspects of the IDP rely on the 1980 programme for the Greater South West. The entire £35M programme depends on a Special Prime Ministerial Committee. The administration is remote from Lozère and until approved projects become more numerous there will be no need for an elaborate local administrative structure as is the case with agriculture.

The Social Fund proposals are transmitted to Brussels in an orthodox manner. A standard form is filled in indicating the responsible body (to date these have been the Chamber of Agriculture, the Farmers' Wives Club, the Chamber of Commerce, a craft organisation and the IDP Association itself). Extra priority is accorded to the projects but the same rate of grant applies (ie, 50% of running costs).

7.6 Achievement to date

The small number of training programmes and the shaky start experienced with the ERDF programme has meant that the bulk of the IDP's achievements to date have been in agriculture.

Drainage and land clearance are obviously basic necessities for any farmer who wants to increase the carrying capacity of his land and these have figured prominently in the IDP dossiers. Up to January 1984, 580 hectares (150 farms) had been drained or were in the process of being drained. A further 350 hectares had been cleared of boulders and stumps. It is reckoned by local officials that each of these improvements allows an average 20-25% increase in the size of the farm's livestock carrying capacity.

Ground clearance and drainage are normally followed up by a pasture improvement scheme - liming, fertilizing, fencing, rotation and a pioneer crop.

As might have been expected in an upland area, assistance for sheep and cattle buildings has been in great demand. Two hundred and eighty dossiers have so far been accepted for this type of improvement representing around £1M worth of capital expenditure. These requests for buildings also trigger off technical support contracts and there are already over 200 of these underway.

Twenty farmers in the Cévennes are presently benefiting from the chestnut improvement scheme and a handful more from forest clearance grants but these aspects of the programme are still in their infancy.

Finally, a minor programme of improving farm tracks is underway with a 1983 allocation of around £75,000.

The shortage of ERDF cash has meant that few projects have as yet got off the ground in the industrial sphere. The non-quota rules allow for four categories of assistance. Under the "Small Business Development" heading, aid has been allocated to two small industrial estates. The "Innovation" category has produced only one project so far, a feasibility study into a revival of the slate industry. Under the category "Artisan Development Schemes" assistance has been allocated towards a bark stripping plant, a furniture factory and a building firm. A number of rural tourist businesses have also been assisted.

All this is a far cry from the sizable dossier of schemes set out at the beginning of the project but it must be recalled that the programme is as yet less than three years old and a large number of ERDF supported schemes are still under consideration.

Under the ESF heading, training programmes are now beginning to get off the ground. Five hundred and twenty students are undergoing agricultural instruction and 110 farmers' wives are presently on separate management courses. Five hundred and thirty-five individuals are involved in courses for small businessmen with a further 68 in craft training schemes. Projects to instruct people involved in open air tourist activities have attracted 100 students so far.

Conclusion

Although the IDP is only three years old, the pattern of development is becoming clear. A specific budgetary allocation for the FEOGA section plus the prior existence of a number of specialised administrative bodies has meant that the agricultural component of the scheme has got off to a flying start. Demand for assistance already outstrips supply and rates of grant are being cut back accordingly. The impact on the local economy has been wholly positive and, combined with parallel national measures of structural reform and with its emphasis on small to medium sized farms, the IDP is going a long way towards striking a balance between population retention and income enhancement - two objectives which are not always incompatible. The impact on the national and EEC economies is less clear cut and it may be adjudged that widespread application of IDP type policies would further contribute to surpluses particularly in the dairy sector. The case for a mountain policy is not, however, considered to be an economic one in France but has strong social, cultural and environmental aspects.

The ERDF side of the operation presents an entirely different picture, however. With no specific sum of money set aside for ERDF backed operations, Lozère had to fight for its slice of a much larger cake - two, in fact. On the one hand, a block of non-quota finance had already been allocated to the Greater South West Region and had been earmarked for specific types of projects in response to Spain's forthcoming EEC membership. On the other, essential road and infrastructure improvements had to be justified as part of the national quota allocation. The expectations of the local business community were raised and then dashed as the political wrangling continued. Nonetheless, an energetic Development Officer is now in post and a comprehensive development programme

drawn up to meet the criteria of the non-quota programme is currently awaiting the approval of an Interministerial Committee.

The tardiness of the ERDF programme combined with the relatively small scale of the ESF training programme means that the Lozère project cannot yet be termed "integrated" in the true sense. It is a development programme for small to medium sized farms with a number of related rural development projects either underway or in the pipeline. Its success on the ground cannot yet be measured fully but it has already gone a long way towards bringing officials together from many and varied government and semi-government agencies. Despite obvious difficulties, there is an optimism about the region which did not exist previously. As with all such programmes, however, there is the danger of raising expectations too high and this has certainly been the case with the ERDF side of the operation.

It is unlikely that it will be possible to measure success for perhaps a decade. Any sector of the economy can benefit from a short term boost such as that provided by the £8M FEOGA grant. This finance is, however, designed to produce the conditions for sustained and self-generating improvement and this depends on the market conditions and permanent support mechanisms for the type of produce which can be provided from a fairly small scale upland farm business. It also depends heavily on the degree of business diversification which can be achieved on each farm particularly in the field of small scale tourism and craft enterprises.

The economics of small scale upland farming do not appear to stand up without substantial permanent subsidy, environmentally damaging intensification or demographically unacceptable farm amalgamation unless farming is only one of several mutually supporting revenue sources. This is not simply a case of increasing the amount of guidance money allocated to upland areas (although this will be required as an interim measure) but of reorientating the aims and objectives of the Agricultural Fund to encompass more integrated and comprehensive rural development programmes. The pull on the resources of the other two structural funds (ESF and ERDF) from urban areas will be too great over the next ten years to rely on them complementing the FEOGA guidance allocation.

The focus in France is now shifting from Lozère to future integrated development programmes in the more Mediterranean regions. Indeed, a pilot project has already begun in advance of EEC budgetary allocation in the neighbouring Hérault Département. If, however, northern Europe is to embark on its own IDP's for upland areas then Lozère provides a useful model and would warrant more detailed research.

VIII CONCLUSION

A comparative study of two different parts of Europe almost one thousand miles apart has been made easier by one fortuitous circumstance. Despite the difference in altitude and latitude there is a sub-region of Lozère which is remarkably similar to upland Grampian. In the northern part of the Cévennes and the Margeride plateau, the effects of high altitude and southerly latitude cancel each other out. Combined with an acid granite-based soil structure, a glaciated landscape and a moderate rainfall pattern well distributed throughout the year, the growing conditions of upland Grampian are reproduced in what is geographically part of the Mediterranean region of Languedoc-Roussillon. To be able to control these basic variables made the task of comparing other features of the economy and society of the two areas a less complicated exercise.

Both areas have followed their separate paths from Mediaeval feudal patterns of landholding and exploitation towards present day patterns where modern business techniques, bank borrowing, marketing and reinvestment are the norm. Major historical events in Europe have left their mark on both areas particularly on the land tenure arrangements but also on the demand for products. In the 19th century, cheap North American grain, war supply requirements, and improvements in road, rail and sea communication all affected the type of product towards which the peasant turned. He was increasingly pulled away from subsistence farming and local outlets towards national and international markets. The old attitudes and patterns of behaviour rooted in the tried and tested survival routines of the past were slowly eroded and gradually, in both areas, farming patterns emerged which reflected more the attitudes of the city merchant than the peasant. Business farming emerged more quickly in Grampian spurred on by improving lairds and a tenanted landholding system which was more conducive to changes brought about by market forces than the small scale owner occupier system in Lozère. Relics of the old feudal patterns persisted longer in Lozère and are now the focus of Government structural policy.

Today, Lozère is characterised by small scale family farms with virtually no hired labour. Most are devoted to livestock rearing and range from the late 19th

century patterns of mixed land use "dog and stick" farms to more specialised units using the latest production methods. Beef breeding and dairying predominate in Margeride with a certain amount of sheep reared to glean the pastures and provide employment for the elderly family members. Cereals are also grown not for cash as in upland Grampian but mainly for fodder. The land market is tight, partly because of the demand for second homes but mainly because so much is tied up in common pasture, short-term leases or is the property of untraceable owners. Much importance is placed upon the need to loosen up this system thus enabling larger and more economically viable farming units.

This picture contrasts with the predominant pattern of livestock rearing in upland Grampian - large or medium sized holdings employing hired labour and importing much of their fodder requirements from beyond the farm gates. But this predominant type should not obscure the many small family farms in upland Grampian which, in size and turnover, approach the levels of their French counterparts, but have not benefited from Government policy to the same degree. The situation is also changing in Grampian with greater use of family labour on the larger farms and a trend towards more owner occupation (creating its own problems for new entrants). Livestock rearing is also the mainstay in upland Grampian with the production of store cattle predominating.

And yet, despite the many differences, both these areas are beset today by similar problems - remoteness from main markets, outmigration brought about by farm amalgamation, weaknesses in the manufacturing sector, services declining and an ageing population structure. In both countries since the War, national and local Government has taken a greater interest in the rural economy. In Britain, this has been marked by an emphasis upon self-sufficiency in food and timber production. Efficiency and labour shakeout have been emphasised until recent years. In France, strong political forces have dictated more broadly based social policies with a greater emphasis on supporting the small family farm. Mountain policy has become a term freely used by both politicians and administrators to denote a national will to preserve and develop the upland economy. This policy was relaunched in 1983. The uplands are important in the French national consciousness - not only the seat of the most effective resistance movements during the War but also a source of gastronomic pride - the home of

fine cheeses, herbs, game, mushrooms, berries and chestnuts so important to the French culture. The fact that no fewer than three post-war French Presidents had strong political and domestic ties to the mountain areas has also been highly significant.

Against this background and in the light of recent changes in EEC Structures Policy, it seemed worth asking whether the UK and upland Scotland in particular could benefit from any of the policies which had emerged since the War in Lozère or from the institutions which had grown up to translate these policies into action. The question was given added pertinence by the fact that Lozère had been chosen as one of the three areas for the EEC's experimental Integrated Development Programmes. The cultural, social and economic differences between North East Scotland and the Western Isles meant that any conclusions drawn from the similar experiment taking place on these islands would be of limited relevance.

The previous chapters have demonstrated the complexity of French Government and semi-Government institutions. Successive Governments have implemented national policy by laying down layer upon layer of administration leaving old structures in place but curtailing their powers or altering their function. To this complexity must be added the ongoing decentralisation reforms of the Mitterand Government which are transforming the relationships between the various tiers of Government, a process which had already begun under Giscard d'Estaing.

Until recent years, the main agents called upon to implement mountain policy were DATAR and the Ministry of Agriculture. As shown in previous chapters, the latter differs from its counterpart in this country by having a much broader remit and many more staff in the sub-regional or Departmental headquarters. Its rural development remit extends to rural planning, rural television, farm forestry development and tourism as well as some of the more familiar functions of farm advice and subsidy allocation. It has often filled the gap in France left by a weak local Government structure, one that is only now beginning to take on planning and economic powers. Rural plans in the United Kingdom tend to be fairly bland documents based upon urban land use plans but translated into a context where little physical growth is taking place. What development there is in farming and forestry is beyond their remit both in the economic and in the land use sense. The authority carrying out the planning has therefore neither the power to control that which is

growing nor the power to develop the key primary sectors which require economic stimulation. Such plans in reality are confined to rural villages where infrastructure policies can be set out and economic development measures often reduce to advance factory programmes and the like. Outside this realm, the plans contain statements of exhortation to governmental or quasi-governmental agencies. If the Ministry of Agriculture in this country (or DAFS) along with the Forestry Commission had a statutory involvement in the rural planning process rather than a consultative role and if such economic and land use planning took place within a framework of clearly defined national policy towards the upland areas then structure planning would make a greater impact upon those sectors of the rural economy which matter. Such a broad rural development remit would also tend to mitigate against some of the excesses caused in the past by a rigid adherence to the food production remit.

DATAR, that instrument of centralised French planning, is being forced to adapt to the changing circumstances of regionalisation. The bulk of its budget is still allocated towards major infrastructural projects but a sum has been set aside for a variety of small projects in what are called "fragile" rural areas. FIDAR, referred to in detail in Chapter V, is concerned with more than the small business sector, and the projects which it assists fall within the remit of almost every Government Ministry. Its importance lies not in the manner of its disbursement or even in its scale, but in the fact that it can only be used within certain geographically defined areas. These are the remotest and the most disadvantaged and exclude prosperous rural areas in rich farming belts or around major towns. These are the areas for which few policy concessions are made in this country outside the Highlands and Islands Development Board area. If there is to be a meaningful policy towards rural areas in Scotland then positive discrimination towards the remoter upland areas must be an important part of such a policy. The size of a town is not a suitable criterion for applying such a policy as there are many small prosperous commuter towns in the countryside around our major towns and cities. The truly fragile areas, to use the French expression, are remote from main markets, heavily reliant on primary products, have a poor soil and a difficult climate.

The history of forestry in Lozère was given more than a passing mention in the earlier chapters because of

its future importance in the context of EEC Structures Policy and UK agricultural legislation. A "Green Paper" on the broad question of EEC Forestry Policy has recently been published by the Commission but it will be some time before this is translated into firm policy.

The long association between farming and forestry in Lozère has been highlighted in the previous chapters as well as the gradual establishment of State Forestry in the form of the ONF. In between are the many hundreds of small communes which own forests and the many thousands of absentee landowners who hold forest blocks, some for commercial reasons, some for tax reasons and others for reasons of sentiment.

Forestry has developed along such a different path in France that it is difficult to make meaningful comparisons with this country. At the farm level, however, forestry provides an important additional source of farm revenue but this depends upon good technical advice and a collective approach to marketing. Both of these functions are provided by a special section of the Chamber of Agriculture which, as already noted, fulfils a range of functions carried out in this country by the Colleges, the Unions and DAFS itself. The growing of timber enables relief to be sought from certain local taxes and this provides an added incentive to the small scale grower, but the overall importance of forestry as with tourism, lies in the fact that it enables a larger number of persons to live off the land than would otherwise be the case. It also provides a regular incidental income as a haven for game, a source of timber, mushrooms, lichen and berries as well as providing diversity in what could otherwise be a bleak and uninteresting landscape to the tourist. Its economic importance to the farm will grow in future if European consumption trends in meat and dairy produce continue to decline, but this will depend upon farmers' attitudes, upon their acquired level of knowledge and upon the transfer of support arrangements from existing products.

At an institutional level, the French Forestry Authority, the ONF, has long been part of the Ministry of Agriculture. This close link has recently been strengthened at the level of the département by bringing local ONF offices and agricultural departments under the joint tutelage of the Commissaires de la République (the successor to the Prefect). It seems odd in this country that functions as remote as fisheries and agriculture continue to be directed

from a single Government department while the two land based activities of forestry and farming remain so separate.

The institution of local Government has long been weak in France outside the main urban areas. This has led to a number of organisations which have no direct equivalent in the UK stepping in to fill the vacuum. Among these are the Consular Chambers which perform a representative and an administrative role at one and the same time. Their ability to levy funds also gives them powers of economic development which until recent times were denied to the relatively weak Communes. Thus it is that the Chamber of Agriculture in Mende plays a central part in the day-to-day running of the Integrated Development Programme or the Chamber of Small Tradesmen organises training courses, again with IDP support, or finances advance factory development. The airport in Mende was constructed by the Chamber of Industry. Legally constituted bodies such as these can attract Government funds on the same basis as a local authority and in areas such as Lozère they often have more financial muscle.

The other group of bodies which has been drawn into the vacuum is that of the non-profit making Mixed Economy Societies. Such bodies were usually set up to solve a particular problem of infrastructure provision but have often remained in business as a kind of enterprise trust drawing money in from the supply of a particular service and reinvesting it in aspects of rural development such as workshop provision.

Power at the local level is therefore traditionally extremely diffuse and the traditional way for local "notables" to overcome this has been to accumulate a large number of posts in different local organisations, a practice which the present Government is trying to stop. President Mitterand, using the rhetoric of decentralisation inherited from his predecessor, is strengthening the power of the regional authorities by adding a representational dimension onto what were previously mere administrative arrangements. In many senses, it can be said that the functions of the Département and the Region in France are moving, for better or worse, towards the British model. There are still, and will continue to be, important differences however.

It is at the level of the individual village or Commune that differences are most striking and where perhaps

we have most to learn in this country. The Communes are an important source of grass roots participation. The status and latterly the resources of the average Commune in Lozère are much greater than a community council in Scotland and a shrewd and influential mayor can attract substantial economic benefits for his village, sometimes by playing one outside agency off against another, sometimes by succeeding in combining resources of a number of agencies on a specific project. Communes have the opportunity to increase their power and influence by combining into a Communal Grouping.

Projects concerned with small scale economic development in Lozère tend to have their origin at the level of the Commune or else come about because a group of individuals have come together in order to form an officially recognised association for the purposes of grant allocation. This contrasts with the situation in this country where initiatives tend more to be channelled down from the District, Regional or even the Government level. The emphasis on group action is also less in this country with grants either going to individual businessmen or else being carried out on behalf of a community by the local authority itself.

Under the recent decentralisation laws, mayors of Communes have important budgetary and planning responsibilities but due to shortage of staff, they will continue to rely heavily upon the expertise of Government outposts, notably the local office of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Turning finally to the Integrated Development Programme - are there any lessons to be learned for the uplands of Scotland? It is likely that Orkney and Shetland will embark upon their own IDP programmes during 1986 and the recent EEC Structures Regulation makes provision for such programmes (special regional measures) elsewhere in mainland Britain following an initiative by the Council of Ministers. It is, however, more a question of political will by the Member State particularly in view of the fact that the greater part of the resources for any particular project will have to be found from the national budget. Such a positive attitude towards the future of the Less Favoured Areas has long been a feature of French political thinking but such attitudes have yet to find focus and direction in this country.

We are only a little over half way through the Lozère

IDP and it would be unfair to draw any sweeping conclusions but the experiment has already given certain pointers towards other such upland programmes which combine EEC and national resources.

A truly "integrated" development programme must achieve integration at a number of different levels. In Lozère the programme was well integrated at the planning stage with a carefully thought through dossier setting out aims, objectives and budgetary requirements.

The difficulty in implementation, however, appears to be due to the fact that the three Funds employed were conceived under different circumstances, and entail subtly different forms of relationships between the nation state and the Commission. Each has been separately and painstakingly negotiated by different Ministries. The national civil servants both in France and the UK tend to view each Fund as their alternative source of revenue giving a degree of independence from their respective Treasuries. The European Regional Development Fund in particular has been used as a source of clawback finance for high priority projects. The Greater South West scheme designed as a buffer against Spain's and Portugal's entry has already been referred to. Work has already been started on its successor, the Integrated Mediterranean Programme. In the United Kingdom, inner city schemes have come to the fore in recent years despite the original aims of the European Regional Development Fund. This is one of the drawbacks of not allocating a specific sum of money to a particular IDP in advance as was the case with the FEOGA portion of the IDP programmes.

Then there is integration at the local level. Both IDPs in a sense cut across the ongoing programmes of a number of existing agencies and authorities. Their separate programmes had to be realigned, adjusted and welded together on the spot. In Lozère, common sense seems to have prevailed and workable solutions were devised in a remarkably short space of time. If the IDP experiment is to be repeated, however, institutional improvements could be made such as seconding key individuals to a central team. This could go some way towards resolving contrasting or even competing professional attitudes towards the nature of the problems to be faced and their ultimate solutions.

As regards integration at project level, there are as

yet few concrete examples where all three funds have been brought to bear on a problem in a concerted manner. This may be because the Social and Regional Development Fund projects are only beginning to get off the ground but it could also be due to a compartmentalised attitude towards the function of each Fund. This is the level where the real test of integration must be faced. If the Funds cannot be brought together at project level then it may indicate either that the funds or the attitudes towards them are too inflexible and the solution might be an all-purpose Development Fund for remote rural areas or a more flexible use of the guidance portion of FEOGA for broadly based rural development projects.

Certainly at the level of the individual farm or small business there is a strong case for integrating investment decisions within a three or five year improvement scheme or business plan. The production of a business plan or a farm development plan is nowadays common practice for larger scale enterprises and there is no reason why smaller businesses cannot benefit from this discipline providing that the necessary professional backup is on hand. Part time farmers in particular would benefit from a programme which draws together their various sources of income and forecasts their cash flow over a number of years under different sets of assumptions.

An integrated development programme is also, as its name implies, concerned with the development of a particular region. Development implies the more efficient use of an area's resources to the benefit of its inhabitants but, given current surpluses in Europe, this cannot mean squeezing more and more food out of the land. Farming units in remote marginal areas must begin to take a broader view of the land and landscape resources at their disposal. The emphasis in future IDP's must be more towards assisting farmers to diversify out of food production and into farm-based but food related activities. This may encourage a movement towards part time farming in certain cases, but increased efficiency in others - a growth and diversification in farm income without a corresponding increase in levels of production.

The increase in meat and dairy produce in Lozère is already impressive, but if there were similar IDP programmes with similar results in other areas of Europe - the Gaeltacht, the Pyrenees, Calabria, Macedonia, Northern Portugal - then the result would surely be further overproduction of meat and milk.

If we are to devise programmes designed to increase the average incomes of these areas then it cannot be through increasing aggregate food supply. It must be through stimulating the production of commodities for which there is a growing demand. Looking at the range of resources which remote upland and coastal areas possess, and at the trends in demand likely to take place throughout urban Europe in the years ahead, can we chart out the direction of future Integrated Development Programmes (assuming that we do aim for true development of some form rather than a process of mothballing through perpetual and open-ended cash handouts)?

To forecast beyond five years ahead is always hazardous, but supposing we were to take an optimistic approach towards social and economic trends in Europe over the next ten or twenty years - increased prosperity for those in employment, easier communications between individuals, home and workplace, more leisure time and longer holidays, increased uniformity of lifestyles between regions and nations, training and retraining episodes distributed throughout the individual's lifetime, a blurring between educational and leisure pursuits, greater attention to health and diet and a greater appreciation of a diminishing natural heritage.

Under these circumstances there will be an increased demand not for milk, mutton or beef, but for solitude, quality, diversity, education, natural beauty and recreation, all of which are abstract, almost spiritual requirements which the existing remote rural population and their offspring can readily convert into marketable commodities - courses in crafts, local history and ecology, second homes, spas and retreats, birdwatching holidays, hunting trips, cross-country skiing weekends, the specialist production of unusual food items and many other small business ventures which can't even be guessed at presently. The process is already underway if only we could recognise its significance. It won't mean the disappearance of the full time farmer, forester or fisherman in the remote areas and it certainly won't mean the disappearance of the specialist livestock breeder, but they most surely come to represent a diminishing group, with the part time farmer drawing his income from a number of sources coming to dominate the economic scene in the remoter areas.

Any programmes designed to develop a local economy under these circumstances would have to put much less

emphasis on funds earmarked for food production and agricultural development, and more on the development of small business enterprises, the expansion of farming into non food related activities, and courses designed to offer the farming community the opportunity to develop new skills. What it requires is something more akin to an all-purpose rural development fund than to any fund designed to implement a particular European or national policy of a sectoral nature.

In the less favoured areas of northern Europe, agricultural surpluses and restrictions on agricultural spending may mean that the experiment as conceived in the late seventies is not repeated. This should not mean the end of IDPs, however. A vast managed market, such as the European Economic Community owes a certain debt to those individuals and areas which lose out under the particular management techniques employed. The CAP owes no one a living but integrated programmes can, in future, be used to help remote communities adapt to changed market conditions. If the urban markets of Europe are demanding tourism, timber or truffles as well as milk, mutton or beef, then the training and capital investment measures of future IDPs should be helping farmers and other small businessmen in remote areas to make the necessary painful adjustments. The history and geography of these areas is so diverse that individually tailored schemes will be required rather than a blanket approach by way of Directive or Regulation. In the final analysis, the greatest economic asset of these areas could be their diversity.

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