Cameroon's main marketing board: history and scope of the ONCPB

Laan, H.L. van der

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H. Laurens van der Laan

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H. Laurens van der Laan

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Acknowledgements

This paper is one of a series of publications on African marketing boards written by research workers of the African Studies Centre in Leiden (see list at the back). These studies are broadly divided into a) case studies covering one country; and b) general studies dealing with several countries.

The present paper is a case study, for which material was collected in Cameroon in July and August 1985. I acknowledge the help of the ONCPB in Douala, in particular of Mr. R. Melingui, *Directeur Général,* and of Mr. A. Biwolé, *Directeur des Achats*. I also thank the *Institut des Sciences Humaines* for various forms of help, and Dr. A.M. Mboudou and Dr. E. Metuge for useful discussions on the subject. I am further grateful to Dr. J. C. Hoorweg and other colleagues at our Centre for useful comments and suggestions. While acknowledging their help I should emphasize that I alone am responsible for the views expressed here and for any errors of fact or interpretation.

Summary

The creation of the ONCPB, *Office National de Commercialisation des Produits de Base*, in 1976 was a turning point in the chequered history of government regulation of agricultural marketing in Cameroon. In the colonial period the British had introduced their own type of marketing board in those areas of present-day Cameroon that were under their rule, and the French had done the same in other areas. After independence these two types existed side by side for some 15 years. The establishment of the ONCPB, overnight becoming the largest marketing board of the country, went a long way in unifying and harmonizing the marketing arrangements in francophone and anglophone Cameroon.

The ONCPB received legal powers to regulate and control the marketing of five export crops: cocoa, coffee, cotton, groundnuts and palm kernels, the first two by far the more important. It is a special feature of Cameroon - not found elsewhere in West Africa - that both arabica and robusta coffee are grown. Since these two varieties require different marketing arrangements, it is desirable to treat them as separate crops, thus bringing the number of ONCPB crops to six.

The legal powers of the ONCPB do not dictate a standard pattern for its participation in marketing. In fact, the ONCPB's commercial activities vary from crop to crop and between anglophone and francophone Cameroon, revealing a flexibility which seems characteristic for the Cameroonian authorities. Where the ONCPB's involvement is limited, the roles of private enterprises and cooperative organizations are correspondingly larger and vice versa. ONCPB's collaboration with private enterprise, operating under licence, is noted for its close and vigilant supervision. Relations between cooperative enterprise and the ONCPB are more relaxed but also require frequent negotiations and detailed agreement.

1. Introduction

This paper deals with the ONCPB, *Office National de Commercialisation des Produits de Base*, the largest crop marketing organization in Cameroon. In the first part the chequered history of government control of agricultural marketing (1) is reviewed, and the creation of the ONCPB in 1976 is discussed as the culmination of various efforts to reorganize and harmonize the marketing arrangements in the country.

The second part of the paper examines the scope of the ONCPB, that is the extent of its participation in actual marketing. It appears that the commercial role of the ONCPB varies from one crop to another and between regions. This leads to a discussion of the roles which are delegated to private enterprises operating under licence, and to cooperative organizations.

This paper supplements earlier research by Hesp (1985) who investigated the level and stability of the official producer prices for the ONCPB crops; the production trends of export and food crops; and the purposes for which the ONCPB's trading surpluses have been used. I have also made good use of the work of two Cameroonian scholars, Mboudou (1983) and Metuge (1983), who contributed papers to an international seminar on Marketing Boards in Tropical Africa, held in Leiden in 1983.

The information assembled here has not previously been published in such a concise form. I hope that this will make it useful for many Cameroonian administrators, either as an introduction or for easy reference. The three diagrams may be particularly helpful.

The paper is further addressed to academic and general readers. To suit people who are familiar with the marketing boards of anglophone Africa but find it difficult to understand the special features of the boards of francophone Africa, I examine those features in detail in section 9.

Since Cameroon is bilingual official French terms have an official English equivalent. Sometimes these English equivalents have special connotations of which Cameroonian readers are aware but which may confuse foreign readers. Where misunderstandings seemed possible to me, I took the safe way of leaving the French terms untranslated. These terms are printed in italics throughout the paper.

2. Agricultural marketing in Cameroon

Discussions on agricultural marketing in tropical Africa usually introduce two broad divisions. First, the division between large- and small-scale production -- a division which in Cameroon should be specified as one between modern plantations on the one hand and small farmers on the other (In recent years many 'small' farmers have expanded their operations considerably but for practical purposes they remain classified as 'small farmers'.) The second division relates to destination: some crops are entirely or largely exported, while others are sold on the domestic market. In Figure 1, which is based on these divisions, I have allocated some 30 crops to four cells. The crowded cell 1 suggests a predominance of small-scale production for domestic consumption -- a predominance which can be substantiated with volume figures.

Diagrams like this have to be updated from time to time. A rising standard of living in Cameroon has for instance caused some former export crops such as groundnuts and palm oil to be increasingly absorbed by the domestic market. Similarly, the growth of industry in Cameroon has reduced the amounts available for export of crops such as cotton, palm kernels and tobacco, because several new factories are now buying large amounts of these crops as inputs for their manufacturing processes.

Cell 2, which lists export crops cultivated by small farmers, enables us to demarcate the place of the ONCPB. The link with small farmers and export crops indicates that, for purposes of international comparison, the ONCPB should be classified as an export marketing board (Hesp & Van der Laan, 1985, pp. 5-8). Cocoa and coffee are the principal crops, each of them accounting for about 30 per cent of Cameroon's export earnings during the 1970s. (Later figures are lower because oil exports revolutionized the balance of trade.) Groundnuts, although an ONCPB crop,

Figure 1. Agricultural marketing in Cameroon, by scale of production and destination

scale of production	production mainly for domestic consumption		production mainly for export	
mainly small-scale	millet, maize, sorghum cassava, potatoes, yams, taro, macabo bananas, plantains groundnuts, sesame seed palm oil, coconuts various peas and beans various fruits and vegetables	cell 1	cocoa coffee cotton palm kernels tobacco	cell 2
mainly large-scale	sugar cane rice wheat	cell 3	rubber bananas pineapple oil palm produce tea	cell 4

are found in cell 1. In the past Cameroon exported a fair amount of groundnuts, but since 1974 the entire production has been consumed domestically and the ONCPB's responsibility has become nominal. Finally, tobacco, a rather recent cash crop in Cameroon, is cultivated under close supervision of two large tobacco companies, which are also taking care of marketing. Hence, there is no need for the ONCPB to fulfil this function.

Cell 4 relates to export plantations. As elsewhere in Africa these plantations are allowed to do their own overseas marketing but it should be pointed out that the marketing skills of plantation companies usually depend on their size: smaller plantations may be poorly equipped for it and may be quite happy to sell to a marketing board. This is illustrated by the banana industry, where the *Organisation Camerounaise de la Banane* (OCB) acts as a marketing board for several small plantation companies, in addition to its main function of growing bananas on its own estates. A merger between the OCB and the ONCPB is unlikely because the marked perishability of bananas requires a highly specialized marketing apparatus.

Government intervention with respect to domestic crops has been limited and may be summarized as follows. Two parastatal companies are involved in the production and marketing of grains: SODEBLE for wheat and SEMRY (*Société d'Expansion et de Modernization de la Riziculture de Yagoua*) for rice. In addition SOSUCAM and CAMUCO have sugar cane plantations near Yaounde and produce sugar for the domestic market. In cell 1 government intervention is represented by MIDEVIV (*Mission de Développement des Cultures Vivrières*), which is engaged in the production of foodstuffs, and the *Office Céréalier*, which is a grain marketing board operating in the millet and sorghum markets of the North.

3. Some political history

Contemporary Cameroon consists of ten provinces. The area now covered by the South West and North West Provinces was under British rule until 1 October 1961. From that time stems the influence of the English language in administration, commerce, education, etc. The area is therefore often, but informally, called anglophone Cameroon. In a review covering a period of several decades it turns out that the informal names are more convenient than the (often changed) formal names. The remaining eight provinces were under French rule until 1 January 1960 and are often called francophone Cameroon. Here again we will use the informal names.

At the beginning of 1960 when francophone Cameroon became independent the political future of anglophone Cameroon, then called Southern Cameroons, was still undecided. Would it remain part of Nigeria, which was scheduled to become independent on 1 October 1960, or join the *République Cameroun*? At a plebiscite in February 1961 the people of Southern Cameroons voted in favour of the second alternative. In the following months it was decided that the new, united, or rather reunited,(2) country would be a federal state with two official languages, English and French. Southern Cameroons would be called West Cameroon and the *République Cameroun* became East Cameroon. It was further necessary to unify customs regulations and to adopt a common currency. The CFA franc was chosen and the Nigerian pound which had been used in Southern Cameroons was withdrawn from circulation. Plans were also made to improve communications between the two parts of the federation. Thus, a branch line was built from Mbanga on the existing railway line in francophone Cameroon to Kumba in anglophone Cameroon. This project was completed in 1969. Roads were also improved to provide better connections between Douala and Buea, Victoria, Tiko and Kumba.

The federal state of 1961 was superseded by a unitary state in 1972, the United Republic of Cameroon. The names West Cameroon and East Cameroon were no longer used and geographical references had to be made henceforth in terms of provinces. As we saw above, anglophone Cameroon consisted of two, and francophone Cameroon of five, later eight provinces.

This brief account of Cameroon's political history is necessary as background information for Figure 2, which shows all the predecessor organizations of the ONCPB. The area to the left in the diagram refers to anglophone, and the area to the right to francophone Cameroon. Until 1976 these two areas had different, largely separate, arrangements for the marketing of export crops. Generally speaking the British model of marketing board prevailed in anglophone Cameroon and the French model of *caisse de stabilisation* in francophone Cameroon.

4. The marketing boards in francophone Cameroon, 1955-1976

At the time of independence francophone Cameroon possessed five *caisses de stabilisation*:

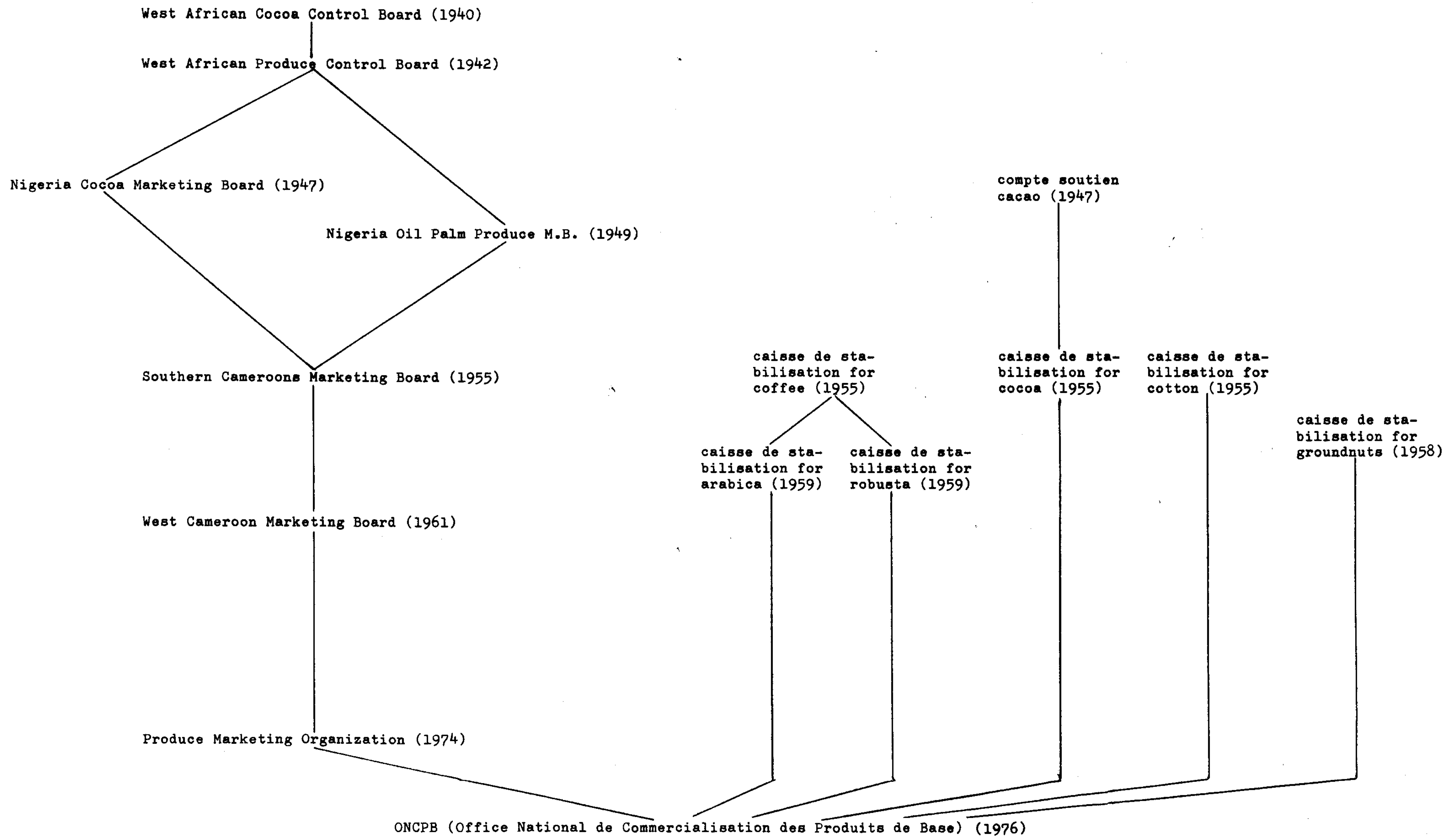
a. *Caisse de stabilisation des prix du cacao*, for cocoa, created in December 1955(3)
b. *Caisse de stabilisation des prix du coton,* for cotton, created in December 1955(4)
c. *Caisse de stabilisation des prix de l'arachide*, for groundnuts, created in February 1958(5)
d. *Caisse de stabilisation des prix du café arabica,* for arabica coffee, created in July 1959(6)
e. *Caisse de stabilisation des prix du café robusta*, for robusta coffee, created in July 1959(7)

These *caisses* were based on a French Act of February 1955, which created a general reserve fund, the *Fond national de régularisation des cours des produits d'Outre-Mer* (Assoumou, 1977, p. 250). Afterwards the French administrators overseas could proceed with the creation of the territorial *caisses*. In December 1955 *Cameroun* created three *caisses*, one for coffee,(8) cocoa and cotton. In 1959 the coffee *caisse* was split up into two separate ones for arabica and robusta.

The *caisses* enabled the government to stabilize the prices for these crops for the duration of a buying season. At first only the port-of-shipment price (*prix de soutien*) was fixed but later (since August 1966) two prices were fixed: the *prix au producteur*(Assoumou, 1977, p. 254) for upcountry and the *prix de soutien* for Douala, the main port of shipment.(9) The difference between the two prices was formed by a cost schedule, the *barême*, see below.

The actual trading was done by private enterprise, the so-called *exportateurs agréés*. To prevent these exporters from making exorbitant profits in times of high

Figure 2. The Genealogy of the ONCPB



world prices, the *caisses* levied a *prélèvement* on each export transaction. In calculating the *prélèvement* a *caisse* considered: 1) the assumed contract price, the *cours authentifié* (This price was based on world prices at that moment and could not greatly differ from the actual contract price.); 2) the *prix de soutien*; and 3) a schedule of external costs. The amount by which the first variable exceeded the sum of the other two was taxed away by the *prélèvement*. If, in times of low world prices, the first variable was lower than the other two, the *caisse* paid the difference (*soutien*) to the exporter. The *prélèvements* were paid to the Customs Departement at the time of shipment (Assoumou, 1977, p. 253).

Because of the *prélèvement* system the *exportateurs* earned little or nothing on their selling operations but there was some scope for profits in their up-country buying operations (see section 9). On the whole, an *exportateur agréé* resembled an agent rather than an independent trader. In these circumstances a realistic *barême* or cost schedule was extremely important. Negotiations on the revision of the *barême* (or particular items in it) therefore occurred frequently.

The five *caisses* remained virtually unchanged from independence till the creation of the ONCPB. The cocoa and coffee *caisses* were based in Douala, while those for groundnuts and cotton had their offices in Yaounde. All *caisses* fell under the responsibility of the Minister of Trade and Industry.

In 1962 a drastic reorganization of the caisses seemed imminent because of plans to establish an *Office National de Commercialisation des Produits Agricoles d'Exportation*, i.e. an export marketing board, which would greatly reduce the role of the *exportateurs agréés* (Assoumou, 1977, p. 263; *Marchés Tropicaux*, 1962, pp. 1195, 1239-40, 1290). Because of opposition from business interests these plans were first reduced in scope — they would apply to cocoa only — and then shelved.

The task of the *caisses* increased in the 1960s because of obligations which the government had to fulfil as a result of international agreements. Thus, the coffee *caisses* had to administer the export quota system instituted by the International Coffee Agreement in 1962. Similarly, the cocoa *caisse* had to monitor and restrict cocoa exports because of Cameroon's membership of the Cocoa Producers Alliance (Assoumou, 1977, pp. 123-9).

As a result of growing international contacts the civil servants in the cocoa and coffee *caisses* acquired the know-how to sell these products overseas. In about 1970 the *caisses* for cocoa and robusta coffee were given the power to make direct sales abroad (*ventes directes* or *affaires spéciales*). The execution of these sales contracts, however, was entrusted to the *exportateurs agréés*, who were paid a commission for this service.

5. The marketing boards in anglophone Cameroon, 1940-1976

The oldest marketing board shown in Figure 2 was the West African Cocoa Control Board. Since this board was responsible for the whole of British West Africa, the cocoa harvested in anglophone Cameroon came under its control. After the war separate marketing boards were established for the various colonies and anglophone Cameroon's cocoa and oil palm produce were henceforth handled by the Nigerian boards. In 1954 significant constitutional changes were introduced in Nigeria, leading to the creation of a federation. Nigeria was divided into regions and the Southern Cameroons was recognized as a separate, albeit small, region. The national marketing boards of Nigeria were subsequently replaced by regional boards, including the Southern Cameroons Marketing Board, which started operations in January 1955 (Assoumou, 1977, p. 246). The regionalization was not complete, however, because selling and exporting was entrusted to a federal organization, the Nigerian Produce Marketing Company in Lagos. For anybody wishing to describe the situation in anglophone Cameroon during the colonial period, it is necessary to study the marketing boards in Nigeria (Helleiner, 1966). And even today it is useful to be familiar with the Nigerian marketing board arrangements.

At first the offices of the Southern Cameroons Marketing Board were in Lagos but in 1959 they were moved to Victoria to permit better supervision of the produce shipped from there. The SCMB was responsible for cocoa, palm kernels and palm oil. (10) In 1961, when the Southern Cameroons joined the *République Cameroun*, a number of changes had to be made. First, a new name was necessary: the SCMB became the West Cameroon Marketing Board (WCMB). Second, some kind of harmonization had to be effected between the marketing arrangements in the two parts of the country. Thus, the producer prices in East and West Cameroon were equalized — an operation which followed the adoption of the CFA franc and the metric system in anglophone Cameroon. Furthermore, coffee was now made a controlled crop for the first time. Third, the WCMB had to be completely separated from Nigeria and the Nigerian Produce Marketing Company. This did not happen until March 1962.

During the federal period, 1961-1972, the WCMB received instructions from the federal government in Yaounde and the state government in Buea. It was the federal government that decided on the level of the producer prices for cocoa and coffee. Moreover, the export quota for coffee was divided by the federal authorities between the WCMB and the coffee *caisses* in Douala. On the other hand the state governments decided which products should be controlled. On this point there were noticeable differences between the two parts of the country. Palm kernels for instance have never been controlled in francophone Cameroon, presumably because a factory in Douala had provided a market since 1944.(11) Similarly, the WCMB extended its control to castor seed (1964) and hides and skins (1966) without corresponding measures in francophone Cameroon.

The export arrangements were also a state responsibility. We have seen that overseas selling was done by the Nigerian Produce Marketing Company in Lagos until March 1962. Then West Cameroon established the West Cameroon Produce Marketing Company (WCPMC) which was registered in London. As the WCMB had no experience with overseas selling, it appointed John Holt Ltd. of Liverpool (a company which had traded in anglophone Cameroon for many decades) as managing agent of the WCPMC. Two years later a London company replaced John Holt, and again two years later the WCPMC was dissolved. Afterwards, i.e. after October 1966, the WCMB temporarily sold through agents, but after telex facilities had been installed in Victoria, it changed to direct selling(12) — an arrangement which continued until the ONCPB took over. It must be pointed out that, although all selling decisions were taken in Victoria, produce was increasingly shipped from Douala, as road and rail transport improved.

In February 1974, that is, some time after Cameroon became a unitary state, the WCMB became the Produce Marketing Organization.(13) The change was largely nominal because the PMO handled the same products as the WCMB. It was given control over coffee, cocoa and palm kernels but not over hides and skins. Although it continued to buy the last two products, this was now done in competition with others.

6. The creation of the ONCPB

On 9 September 1976 an Act was promulgated which established the ONCPB (*Office National de Commercialisation des Produits de Base*).(14) This was an important step for several reasons. First of all, as Figure 2 shows, the ONCPB was the first marketing board which operated in both francophone and anglophone Cameroon. As such it united the systems which the British and the French had left: five *caisses de stabilisation* and the Produce Marketing Organization. To show that the new organization was truly national in character, it was given two names, one French and one English. The English name, which we use only sparingly this article, is National Produce Marketing Board.

Unification required some geographical concentration. The old organizations were established in three towns: Douala, Yaounde and Victoria, but only one of these could be chosen as the headquarters of the new organization. Douala, which already housed three important *caisses*, and was relatively close to Victoria, was the obvious choice. Some activities and some people had to be transferred from Victoria and Yaounde to Douala. A conspicuous change for the staff in Victoria was that responsibility for overseas selling was taken away from them and given to officials in Douala.

A second change was that from *caisse de stabilisation* to *office de commercialisation*. In several countries the *caisse* established by the French in the colonial period was replaced or supplemented by an *office* after independence. Thus, Senegal created an *Office de Commercialisation Agricole* (OCA) in 1960; Togo an *Office des Produits Agricoles du Togo* (OPAT) in 1964; Dahomey (now Benin) an *Office de Commercialisation Agricole du Dahomey* (OCAD) in 1962; and so on. In all these cases the intention was to increase the role of the public sector at the expense of private enterprise. In Senegal this culminated in 1966 in the complete exclusion of private traders from the trade in groundnuts (Van Chi-Bonnardel, 1978, p. 569).

In general the *caisses de stabilisation* belonged to category 3 and the *offices de commercialisation* to category 5 of the classification for marketing boards adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (Abbott & Creupelandt, 1966, pp. 4-8). The difference does not lie in the stabilization of the producer prices but in the participation in trade. In general the *office* does engage in trade, and the *caisse* does not. In Cameroon this distinction began to blur around 1970 because since then the coffee and cocoa *caisses* have often entered into export contracts, as we saw above. They were no longer nontrading organizations. The important question in 1976 was whether the ONCPB would further increase its trading operations — a question of great significance for private enterprise, and one that recalled the discussions in 1962 (see above). The question was not answered until February 1978 when a decree was published which conferred a selling monopoly on the ONCPB.(15) After a transitional period of three years (*Marchés Tropicaux*, 1979, p. 259) selling would be exclusively done by the ONCPB. This curtailed the position of the *exportateurs agréés* but still meant a great deal of work because the execution of the overseas sales contracts would be left to them. Moreover, their role in produce buying was not reduced (see further section 9).

The new monopoly permitted an administrative simplification. As all sales contracts were now made by the ONCPB and as consequently all contract prices were known to them, there was no longer any need to have a *cours authentifié*, which had served as an assumed contract price. It was therefore possible to abolish the *Comité de cotation*, which since 1955 had daily determined the *cours authentifié* on the basis of overseas prices for cocoa, coffee, cotton and groundnuts, as they were registered at various commodity exchanges abroad (Assoumou, 1977, p. 253).

A third point to note is that the *caisses* were so-called single commodity boards while the ONCPB is a multicommodity board (Abbott & Creupelandt, 1966, pp. 14-16). In principle a multicommodity board has more freedom of action in allocating staff and funds. This freedom was, however, limited by the stipulation that the financial accounts for each of the controlled crops should be kept separately (*Marchés Tropicaux*, 1979, p. 259).

The organizational changes were marked by a significant investment. A thirteen-storey building overlooking the port of Douala was constructed to provide the ONCPB with adequate headquarters. Plans for this building dated from 1971(*Marchés Tropicaux*, 1972, p. 292) but their execution was closely linked to the legislation of 1976. The building was completed early in 1979 but many officials had already moved in by October 1978(*Marchés Tropicaux,* 1979, p. 259) and, for all practical purposes, the ONCPB may be said to have started functioning on 1 October 1978.

What were the main motives of the government for creating the ONCPB? I believe that the chief motive was a desire to harmonize the marketing institutions of the two parts of the country. This desire had existed for many years but became stronger when a unitary state was established in 1972. It is important to note that such harmonization demanded a major adjustment in francophone, and only minor changes in anglophone Cameroon. This is remarkable because francophone Cameroon is much larger and more influential, but it should be remembered that there had always been many people who preferred the marketing board system to the *caisse* system, mainly because it favoured state enterprise and curtailed private enterprise (Assoumou, 1977,

p. 249). Because of a general feeling that private enterprise was unscrupulous any proposal to dislodge it from longheld positions could count on a warm welcome.

If harmonization was, indeed, the principal goal, it should also be admitted that the achievements fell far short of it. Considerable geographical differences continued to exist. The ONCPB's participation in export crop marketing is still considerably stronger in anglophone, than in francophone Cameroon, and the role of private enterprise is correspondingly weaker. The ONCPB is well aware of this, and its activities in anglophone Cameroon are still treated as a largely separate enterprise, the Limbe Agency, with its own headquarters in Limbe, (as Victoria has been called since 1983). The ONCPB has coined new terms to suit the geographical diversity. Anglophone Cameroon is called the Limbe Zone, and francophone Cameroon is called the Headquarters Zone (*Zone de Siège*).

7. The shares of public, private and cooperative enterprise

We now turn to contemporary marketing arrangements, i.e. the arrangements as they have applied since 1978, the year in which the ONCPB started to function. As mentioned before, the ONCPB is responsible for cocoa, coffee, cotton, groundnuts and palm kernels. Since arabica and robusta coffee require different marketing arrangements, the ONCPB treats them as two separate crops, thus bringing the number of its crops to six.

Below we must distinguish between the legal concept of control and the economic one of participation. Control refers to the legal powers of a marketing board, which are granted by law. In general a marketing board has full control of the crops for which it is responsible. Quite a different question is whether and to what extent the marketing board participates in the actual marketing. Among African marketing boards a whole scala may be found ranging from boards which handle all stages of marketing to those which confine their activities to one stage. The ONCPB is interesting because its participation varies internally, that is from crop to crop and from region to region. I attribute this diversity to the flexibility of the Cameroonian authorities, which have usually been prepared to modify a general policy to suit the special requirements of particular crops or regions. For the convenience of the readers I have summarized this diversity in Figure 3.

Fig. 3. Approximate shares of public, private and cooperative enterprise in the commercialization of the crops controlled by the ONCPB

		public enterprise	private enterprise	cooperative enterprise
Cocoa	francophone C.	x	xx	x
	anglophone C.	xx	x	x
Robusta coffee	francophone C.	x	xx	x
	anglophone C.	xx	x	x
Arabica coffee	francophone C.	x	--	xxx
	anglophone C.	xx	--	xx
Cotton	francophone C.	xx	xx	--
Groundnuts	francophone C.	x	xxx	--
Palm kernels	anglophone C.	xx	xx	--

The diagram is based on the assumption that the marketing of each crop (represented by a horizontal line) is a matter of collaboration between: 1) producers; 2) producer cooperatives; 3) private commercial enterprise; and 4) public enterprise. It is further assumed that the role of the producers in marketing is roughly the same everywhere and can therefore be omitted from the analysis. Attention may thus be confined to the roles, or shares, of public, private and cooperative enterprise.

On each line there are four crosses, representing the total marketing effort for that crop in that region. The distribution of those four crosses over the columns indicates the shares of the various forms of enterprise. Needless to say, the diagram could be greatly refined (if the appropriate data could be consulted) but here it is used mainly to structure the discussion.

The diagram begins with cocoa and robusta coffee because these are the major crops. The marketing task is shared by the ONCPB, private enterprise and some cooperatives. As the crosses indicate, the ONCPB is weaker in francophone than in anglophone Cameroon. Conversely, private enterprise in the francophone provinces, the so-called *exportateurs agréés,* is stronger (16) than its counterpart, the so-called Licensed Buying Agents, in the anglophone area.

The marketing of arabica coffee (arabica accounts for some 20 per cent of total coffee production) is notable for the important role of the cooperatives.

The marketing of cotton is shared by the ONCPB and SODECOTON, another parastatal, which is engaged in the cultivation, processing and marketing of cotton. Private enterprise is represented here by the CFDT, *Compagnie Française pour le Développement des Fibres Textiles*, which is an important shareholder of the SODECOTON. Cotton should be considered an exception among the ONCPB crops because it requires far more supervision at most stages of cultivation and marketing. There are some useful studies on cotton in Cameroon (CNCC, 1982; Levrat, 1984), which are not summarized here.

As stated, the export of groundnuts was important until 1974. Since then all surpluses for sale have been absorbed by the domestic market and information about groundnut marketing has become scarce. The cross in the first column does not refer to the ONCPB, whose control has become nominal, but to the SODECOTON, which as part of its campaign to promote the cultivation of groundnuts, buys certain quantities from the farmers.

The marketing of palm kernels is controlled in anglophone Cameroon only. The Buying Agents which operate in that area sometimes deliver this product to the ONCPB for export.

In the following sections the marketing activities of private enterprise (sections 8 and 9); cooperative enterprise (section 10); and public enterprise (section 11) are examined.The discussion focuses on cocoa and coffee, because the other ONCPB crops are either insignificant (groundnuts and palm kernels) or highly specialized (cotton).

8. Private enterprise: the Licensed Buying Agents

Licensed Buying Agents (LBA) operate in anglophone Cameroon only. I would like to point out that there is no equivalent of their position elsewhere. Until 1974 there were *acheteurs agréés* in francophone Cameroon but they were agents of the *exportateurs agréés* and not of the *caisses*. It is therefore misleading to use the terms LBA and *acheteur agréé* as equivalents.

The typical LBA is a local trader(17) who buys produce (cocoa, coffee and palm kernels) from the farmers and then delivers it to the ONCPB. Officially he operates as an agent and buys at prices fixed by the government. In theory, all risks are borne by the principal and not by the agent, but in practice LBAs are more than mere agents and bear a certain amount of risk. Like independent traders they examine the quality of the produce and take care of weighing, storage and transport. Their task is completed when they deliver their produce, properly sacked, to the board's stores, where they also receive payment. For their operations LBAs need buildings, equipment, staff and working capital.(18)

At first, the only place where the LBAs could deliver their produce were the Board stores in Bota and Victoria but in the course of time up-country stores were established in Kumba, Mamfe, and Bamenda. This meant that LBAs had to transport their produce over shorter distances and needed less working capital.

LBAs are rewarded by a commission or buying allowance. Many LBAs rather see themselves as traders who buy at the official producer price and 'sell' to the Board at another fixed price, which is calculated as the producer price plus the buying allowance. To compensate them for their transport costs the LBAs receive a transport allowance. Competent and efficient LBAs are able to keep their costs below the buying and transport allowances and thus make a profit.

9. Private enterprise: the *exportateurs agréés*

The *exportateurs agréés* are traders or, more usually, trading companies. Like all traders they engage in buying and selling, transportation, and the holding and financing of stocks. In the case of robusta coffee their commercial function includes some processing, the so-called hulling. The other crop, cocoa, does not require processing. Below we review these activities in turn.

The first activity of the *exportateur agréé* is buying. Most of the buying is done at markets designated by the authorities. The *exportateur agréé* has to send his staff to these markets to take delivery of the cocoa and robusta, which the cooperatives or the farmers offer for sale. The key member of each buying team is the cashier, a man who is responsible for large amounts of money, because the trade is conducted on a cash-on-delivery basis. There is frequent contact between the buying teams up-country and the office staff of the *exportateurs agréés*, because the latter are obliged to report weekly to the ONCPB about their purchases — an obligation which is rarely fulfilled to the ONCPB's satisfaction.

As in other countries with marketing boards the *exportateur agréé* has to comply with the producer prices fixed by the government and the grading results of the produce inspectors, who, in Cameroon, are employees of the ONCPB. Special for Cameroon are the quota system and the zoning arrangement. Every *exportateur agréé* is given a buying quota based on earlier performance. Purchases should remain within an 85 - 115 per cent range of the quota but the sanctions do not deter dynamic *exportateurs agréés* from trying to increase their purchases year after year. The zoning arrangement links each *exportateur agréé* with particular areas. This facilitates contact with cooperatives, which, in the case of cocoa, are the only sellers. Occasionally *exportateurs agréés* complain about their zones, either because the local cooperatives do not fulfil their obligations, or because production in the area is falling off. The second activity of the *exportateurs agréés* is transportation. They arrange transport from the markets in the production areas to the point of destination, which for robusta coffee is always Douala. For cocoa there are two, albeit minor, alternatives to Douala: the ONCPB takes delivery of some cocoa at its stores at Yaounde, (see section 11) and one *exportateur*, *Etablissements* A.E. Kritikos, transports its cocoa to the port of Kribi for shipment from there. The *exportateurs agréés* normally use their own lorries but at times they send their stocks by rail or employ road transport firms.

With regard to buying and transportation there is a close resemblance between the LBAs and the *exportateurs agréés*. There is for instance a *transport differentiel* item in the *barême* which corresponds to the transport allowance of the LBAs. Keeping transport costs down is therefore as important for the *exportateurs agréés* as it is for the LBAs.

In general, selling, that is overseas selling, consists of several activities such as: a) the negotiation of sales contracts; b) shipment and delivery abroad; and c) receiving payment. These operations correspond roughly to the legal, physical, and financial aspects of exportation. The first activity consists of contacting overseas buyers, negotiating with them about quality, quantity, price and delivery dates, and entering into sales contracts. Selling in this narrow sense is, as we have seen, the prerogative of the ONCPB.

The work of shipment (choosing a ship, contacting the shipping company, and arranging the loading of a consignment) is done by the *exportateurs agréés*. The Bills of Lading are in their names and they are responsible until the overseas buyers have taken delivery of the consignment. The overseas buyer pays the *exportateur agréé* and not the ONCPB!

One may wonder whether it was wise to retain the name *exportateur*, when the ONCPB was given a selling monopoly in 1978. If we look at the legal and commercial aspects of contemporary export arrangements, the name *exportateur* is definitely misleading. However, if we consider the physical and financial aspects, the name is still appropriate.

There is close collaboration between the ONCPB and the *exportateurs agréés*. When the ONCPB has entered into a sales contract, it needs an *exportateur* to execute the contract. When an *exportateur* is approached and accepts — he can refuse but this is rarely done — he undertakes to fulfil the contract as if he himself was the seller.

The fact that the *exportateur agréé* receives the payment suggests that he pockets any profits from the transaction but this is not the case because of the *prélèvement* system, which was introduced by the *caisses* (see section 3) and was retained by the ONCPB. In the same way the *barême* has been retained.

Two complications have been deliberately omitted from the account above. First, part of the cocoa and robusta is not exported but locally processed. Thus, the SIC factory in Douala grinds a considerable proportion of Cameroon's cocoa (see further section 11). In the same way but on a much smaller scale, some local coffee roasters buy robusta for their factories.

The second complication arises from the *déblocage* (stock release) arrangement. The ONCPB is prepared to sell part of its cocoa and robusta to an *exportateur agréé* so that the latter can sell abroad in his own name. Of course he will not ask for a *déblocage* unless he expects to have an opportunity to sell at a price which is higher than the price demanded by the ONCPB. Only exporters with excellent contacts abroad make use of this arrangement because the ONCPB's offer to release a particular quantity is valid for a short period only, say 24 hours. *Exportateurs* are only permitted to ask for the *déblocage* of cocoa and robusta which they themselves have bought, and then only to the level of 30 per cent of their quota.

The *déblocage* arrangement makes it worthwhile for the *exportateurs agréés* to remain well informed about the international market. It also justifies the retention of the word *exportateur* (see above), at least for those companies that regularly use the arrangement. It may be argued that it is advantageous for Cameroon to preserve a fair amount of expertise about the international market, also in the private sector. The fact that the arrangement is highly confusing to outsiders(19) should be taken into the bargain.

We now turn to the ownership of the stocks. The *exportateur agréé* is owner of the cocoa and robusta from the moment of purchase up-country till the moment of delivery to the overseas buyer. A consultancy report (CNCC, 1980, p. 96) provides a chronogram for cocoa for the 1978/79 season. This enabled me to calculate that the stock holding period was 89 days on average. And for robusta coffee the period seems to be longer still (CNCC, 1979).

During the first part of this period the *exportateur agréé* is in a position to improve the quality of his stocks by drying, cleaning and the removal of defective (broken, mouldy, etc.) beans. All these activities together are called *conditionnement*. At the end of this period he sacks the produce in new bags, filled to standard weight and properly marked. These bags are delivered to the *transitaire* (forwarding agent) and remain unopened until they are inspected by the overseas buyer.

All *exportateurs agréés* make great efforts to keep the stock holding period as short as possible. They do so to reduce storage costs and to avoid deterioration of quality. The humid climate of Douala is known for its harmful effects on produce, in particular on cocoa. A further reason to shorten the stock holding period is of a financial nature. In general the length of this period is the main factor in determining the capital requirements of the *exportateur agréé*. As this period is long (see above) he needs a lot of working capital. It is often thought that he can borrow all of this from the banks but this is not true. In the later stages when the cocoa and robusta are in Douala or on board ship, it is relatively easy to get credit from the banks but never to the full value, so that the *exportateur agréé* still needs a lot of capital of his own. This is even more true of the early stages of his operations when the cocoa and robusta are still up-country. Then the financial assistance of the banks is limited, although some credit, related to his quota, is given to each *exportateur*.

This whole matter of finance is extremely important in the relations between the ONCPB and the *exportateurs agréés*. The latter are anxious to ship as early as possible and are in favour of quick and simple procedures with regard to the various documents.(20) It is further important for the *exportateurs agréés* that the stamps, which form part of the coffee export quota system, are issued according to well-known rules so that the burden of stock holding is shared fairly among the *exportateurs*.

The provision of working capital appears to be the chief contribution which the *exportateurs agréés* make to the Cameroonian economy. But in fulfilling this task they run several risks, which, curiously enough, are associated with factors that are generally, and rightly, considered favourable for the economy. Thus, a higher producer price (favourable for the farmers!) raises the working capital requirements of the exporters and compels them to borrow more money or to buy less than before. Furthermore, high *prélèvement* payments as a result of high world prices (favourable for the country!) raise their capital requirements temporarily. To sum up, until the ONCPB can dispose of large sums of working capital, the *exportateurs agréés* are indispensable and their position as a group is secure.

The last activity of the *exportateurs agréés* is processing. Most of the robusta coffee is processed in small factories (*usines de décorticage*) where the beans are freed from other vegetable matter. The farmers could do this themselves but most of them are happy to let the coffee hulling be done mechanically by the *exportateur agréé* . There are some 150 hulling factories in francophone Cameroon. It is one of the wishes of the ONCPB that the *exportateurs* modernize their hulling factories but it seems that these companies use too low a proportion of their allowances for new investment.(21)

We should finally consider some social aspects of the *exportateurs agréés*. To do this we must briefly go back to the 1950s when the export trade in francophone Cameroon was largely controlled by six large European trading companies: the *Compagnie Française d'Afrique Occidentale* (CFAO), *Société Commerciale de l'Ouest Africain* (SCOA), *Société du Haut Ogoué* (SHO), Hollando or CCHA, Paterson & Zochonis (P.Z.) and R.W. King, which belonged to UAC since 1930.(22) It appears that all of these applied for a position as *exportateur agréé* in 1956 when the *caisse* system began to operate. Indeed, the designers of this system counted on these long-established companies as the main representatives of private enterprise in the new organization of the export trade. In the following years the big companies lost interest in the produce trade. By 1962 only Hollando, PZ and SCOA were active as *exportateur agréé* for cocoa (*Marchés Tropicaux*, 1962, p. 1800). By 1971 only Hollando appeared on the list of *exportateurs agréés* and this company gave up in 1974.

As these companies withdrew, another category of traders, the Greeks, came to the fore. For many years there have been Greek traders in Cameroon, mainly in the francophone part. They operated not as employees of companies in Europe but as small independent entrepreneurs. The more successful among them had, by the 1960s, grown to a size large enough to replace the companies mentioned above.

Today the number of *exportateurs agréés*, both for cocoa and robusta, is between 20 and 30. Some of them deal in one product only but others combine cocoa and robusta. As the share allocated to each *exportateur agréé* (which corresponds to his quota) is published in the *Journal Officiel*, it is easy for insiders to calculate which percentage of the cocoa and robusta trade is in the hands of the Greeks. (For outsiders it is more difficult because most *exportateurs agréés* are organized as companies and have chosen a name that does not reveal the nationality or background of the directors). At present more than half of the trade is in the hands of Greek enterprises. The remaining *exportateurs agréés* are Cameroonians. The ONCPB follows an active policy of encouraging and assisting them. Whether their combined share will grow in the future, depends largely on their performance up-country. If the cooperatives are not content with them, or less content than with the Greeks, it will be difficult to advocate measures in favour of the Cameroonian *exportateurs agréés*.

10. Cooperative enterprise

Cocoa and coffee are grown in seven provinces. In three of these (North West, *Ouest* and *Est*) the agricultural cooperatives are dominated by one central organization but in the other four provinces (South West, *Littoral*, *Centre* and *Sud*) the cooperative movement is weak. It is not that there are too few local cooperatives or that they lack members but there is insufficient continuity and inadequate management.

The situation in the *Ouest* Province is often cited as exemplary. In 1958 the UCCAO (*Union des Coopératives de Café Arabica de l'Ouest*) was created as the apex organization for seven cooperatives all operating in the *Ouest* Province. In 1961 a monopoly for arabica coffee was granted to the UCCAO (and to the much smaller COOPAGRO which grouped two dozen European plantation owners). During the 1960s and 1970s the UCCAO invested in offices, stores and factories, which permitted the Union to embark on exportation. The government accorded them therefore the status of *exportateur agréé*. (23) The fact that cooperative enterprise dominates the marketing of arabica coffee is reflected in the producer price system. It has been common practice to describe the producer price as an advance payment, which is followed at the end of the season by a *ristourne* or bonus,(24) the level of which depends on the results of that season's marketing operations. As, in general, the *ristourne* payments have been substantial, and, as private enterprise was entirely excluded, there was no need for the system of *prélèvement* and *soutien* payments. Indeed, the ONCPB merely levies a small *prélèvement* in the form of a fixed rate per tonne.(25) In 1978 the UCCAO extended its operations to robusta coffee, which required a change of name. The acronym now stands for *Union Centrale des Coopératives Agricoles de l'Ouest.* It invested in coffee hulling factories and operates as one among many *exportateurs agréés* in the robusta coffee trade (Champaud, 1983, pp. 241-8).

In the North West Province the North West Cooperative Association Ltd., another apex organization, was established in about 1980. Its main product is arabica coffee, cultivation of which is feasible in two provinces only: *Ouest* and North West. The NWCA has fewer functions than the UCCAO because it does not export but sells its arabica to the ONCPB under the usual arrangements for anglophone Cameroon. The NWCA also acts as LBA for small quantities of cocoa and robusta.

In the *Est* Province there is a government organization, the *ZAPI de l'Est (Zone d'Action Prioritaire Integrée)* which supervises the local cooperatives. This organization has acquired sufficient marketing experience to act as *exportateur agréé* for cocoa and robusta. For this province and these products it is the only *exportateur agréé*.

In the South West Province there are about ten cooperatives which buy cocoa and robusta. Some of them have to compete, with private traders, who, like them, are licensed as buying agents by the ONCPB. All cooperatives are united in the SOWEFCU, the South-West Farmers Cooperative Union. Some of these cooperatives own lorries for the transport of cocoa and robusta — an indication that they have money to invest. The cooperatives distribute profits among their members, but it must be remembered that the profits of LBAs are never large and that they do not reflect high world prices as with the *ristournes* on arabica.

In the three remaining provinces (*Littoral, Centre* and *Sud*) the local cooperatives are called SOCOODER (*Société Coopérative de Développement Rural*). In some areas they are assisted and supervised by CENADEC (*Centre National de Développement Coopératif*) but on the whole they stand on their own. In general they lack the competence and experience to drive a hard bargain when selling their members' cocoa and robusta. Since 1974 there are official rules to regulate the relations between *exportateur agréé* on the one hand and the cooperatives on the other. (No intermediaries are allowed since 1974.) It appears that there are frequent complaints from the *exportateurs agréés,* from the cooperatives, and from the latter's members about the way marketing is conducted at the official buying points in the villages.

It greatly annoys the authorities that the marketing, in particular of cocoa, is marred by so many unsatisfactory elements. They would like to see a strong apex organization, like the UCCAO, established in for instance the *Centre* Province, but the prospect of this happening is remote. In the meantime several attempts are being made to strengthen the cooperatives. A recent move (1985) was the payment of a *ristourne* to cocoa farmers. This may act as an incentive for the members of the cooperatives to insist on better management and improved accounting procedures.

The conclusion from this section seems to be that whenever cooperatives are strong, the role of private enterprise, in particular the *exportateurs agréés*, is small or absent, and vice versa.

11. The ONCPB as a trading enterprise

In anglophone Cameroon the ONCPB functions as a full-fledged trading enterprise. At its stores in Victoria, Bota, Mamfe, Kumba and Bamenda it takes delivery of the cocoa, coffee and palm kernels which the LBAs have bought on its behalf. It has its own lorries to transport produce from its up-country stores to Bota, Victoria and Douala. As the ONCPB is the owner of this produce, the system of *prélèvement* and *soutien* does not apply.(26) Profits made on shipments of this produce therefore belong to the ONCPB. In fact, in years of high world prices the ONCPB earns a great deal on the produce from anglophone Cameroon. Part of this should be seen as a stabilization surplus but part is a trading profit, or, to be more precise, a gross trading profit, from which the appropriate costs should be subtracted. It should be pointed out that the costs of the ONCPB operations in anglophone Cameroon are high, considerably higher than in francophone Cameroon. There are for instance more people employed in anglophone Cameroon.(27) Moreover, more working capital is seasonally required. And, lastly, more fixed assets are used.(28)

We must now turn to the ONCPB in francophone Cameroon. For the first four years it could hardly be described as a trading enterprise. True, it was a selling enterprise (it even had a selling monopoly) but it did not buy any produce. It was a selling-without-buying-enterprise. To those not familiar with the *caisse* arrangements, this sounds absurd, but, as experience in Cameroon shows, it works all right in practice.(29)

In 1982 a marginal but interesting change occurred. The ONCPB was drawn into active buying, much against its will, I guess. This venture into trade concerned the cocoa of inferior quality, the socalled *hors-standard.* Since 1953 this cocoa had been bought by SIC (*Société Industrielle des Cacaos*) which owned a factory in Douala where it processed cocoa beans. It was advantageous for Cameroon to have beans of poor quality grinded locally to avoid further deterioration during the sea voyage and to have cocoa mass and other cocoa products exported instead. This was what SIC did. It was further favourable for the reputation of Cameroon's cocoa that inferior quality was no longer exported.(30)

For many years SIC (and two smaller, more recent factories, SOCACAO and CHOCOCAM) bought a considerable part, up to 30 per cent by weight, of Cameroon's cocoa production (CNCC, 1980, p. 12). But in the 1980/81 season SIC ran into financial problems and could not continue its buying on the same scale. In the following season the factory had to close down and it required external financial support to get it reopened in March 1982. Much to its regret the ONCPB had to lift the ban on the export of *hors-standard* cocoa for several months.

These problems prompted the ONCPB to embark on the *Opération Hors-Standard.* When the 1982/83 season started, it advanced money to a number of cooperatives for the primary buying of *hors-standard.* These cooperatives then delivered their *hors-standard* at the SIC factory in Douala or at the ONCPB stores in Yaounde. In this way the ONCPB and the cooperatives partly took over the activities formerly fulfilled by SIC. The actual trading of the ONCPB consisted of receiving and holding stocks in Yaounde, and of providing working capital for the buying season. The *Opération Hors-Standard* was largely successful, although the ONCPB lost some money when a few cooperatives were unable to repay the advances. Time will tell whether the ONCPB is properly equipped for this task and whether it will increase its trading operations in the francophone provinces.

12. Conclusions

The ONCPB may well be described as a cocoa and coffee marketing board. Inside Cameroon this is an oversimplification but abroad it is a useful approximation. It helps to explain why the ONCPB is vitally concerned with international organizations such as the International Coffee Organization (ICO), the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO), the Inter-African Coffee Organization (IACO) and the Cocoa Producers' Alliance (CPA). It should also be noted that there are many similar cocoa and/or coffee marketing boards in tropical Africa. On the one hand this means that the ONCPB has many fellow marketing boards and may benefit from cooperation with them in the form of sharing information, swapping coffee quotas via the IACO, etc. On the other hand these marketing boards are also competitors. The question should therefore be regularly asked whether or not Cameroon's position compares favourably with that of other countries, in particular in West Africa. And the question of how this affects the opportunities of the ONCPB in the world markets should be thoroughly studied. In one line, arabica coffee, the ONCPB has no competitors, at least not in West Africa. Both the ONCPB and the UCCAO are well aware of this relative advantage.

Government policy with regard to cocoa and coffee cannot be formulated in isolation because these products are cultivated in areas where also many food crops are grown. Many farmers are thus in a position to switch from one line (food crops) to another (cocoa or coffee) and vice versa without encountering great problems. The authorities must therefore take into account that measures to promote the production of cocoa and coffee may adversely affect the supply of food for the urban regions of Cameroon, which obviously could have grave consequences. Recently this has not been a serious problem, however, for it appears that in many areas supplying food to the towns was more profitable for the farmers than growing export crops (Hesp, 1985, p. 120). It must further be noted that the government cannot strongly intervene in food crop marketing because in Cameroon most of these crops are of a nature that easily thwarts official intervention, in particular public marketing and price control. (31) The analysis of production trends and the appropriate producer prices should therefore not be undertaken on a crop-by-crop basis but should adopt a wider framework, encompassing both food and export crop production.

NOTES

1. It was Dr A.M. Mboudou who first drew my attention to the intricate origins of the ONCPB, see Mboudou (1983, pp. 1-5).
2. Re-united refers to the fact that both parts belonged to the German colony Kamerun from 1884 to 1916.
3. *Décret* no 55/1644 of 16 December 1955. The cocoa *caisse* replaced the *Compte Spécial hors Budget Soutien Cacao* of 1947, see Assoumou, (1977, pp. 197-9).
4. *Décret* 55/1645 of 16 December 1955.
5. *Décret* 58/13 of 12 February 1958.
6. *Décret* 59/120 of 23 July 1959.
7. *Décret* 59/120bis of 23 July 1959.
8. *Décret* 55/1643 of 16 December 1955.
9. For groundnuts Garoua was the official port of shipment.
10. In contrast with marketing boards elsewhere the SCMB also handled the produce of some large oil palm plantations and two small cocoa plantations, paying the plantation owners a price which varied with world prices (and *not* the stabilised producer price). This arrangement ended in 1962 and the oil palm plantations began to sell and export their own products.
11. This factory belongs to the CCC (*Complexe Chimique Camerounais*). Initially the acronym stood for *Compagnie Commerciale Chypriote*. The CCC also processes palm kernels from anglophone Cameroon.
12. During the 1970s the WCMB and the PMO sold by tender conducted by telex.
13. *Décret* 74/76 of 1 February 1974
14. Act no 76/20 of 9 September 1976.
15. *Décret* 78/054 of 23 February 1978.
16. Some four times more important, if measured per tonne handled. This can be calculated from a comparison of buying and transport allowances in anglophone, and the *barême* in francophone Cameroon.
17. There were foreign traders in the past, notably UAC, (United Africa Company) and John Holt. These companies gave up their position as LBA in the early 1960s.
18. At first the WCMB gave advances to the LBAs to help them finance their buying operations, but when some of these advances were not repaid, the WCMB gave advances only to LBAs that were cooperatives (Assoumou, 1977, p. 247). A few LBAs own and operate coffee hulling factories.
19. Readers familiar with anglophone Africa probably assume that a selling monopoly implies an export monopoly but the *déblocage* arrangement shows that these two forms of monopoly are not identical.
20. This point of view is expressed repeatedly in the CNCC reports on cocoa and coffee. The wish to ship quickly also explains why *exportateurs agréés* rarely refuse to execute ONCPB contracts. Every refusal means delay in clearing stocks.
21. This suggests that allowances have disadvantages too. True, they provide a strong incentive for the receiver to keep his costs down but they do not stimulate investment.
22. Assoumou (1977, p. 242) mentions also D. Mikes and the *Compagnie Soudanaise* , companies that, unlike the others, operated in Cameroon only.
23. This legal category was created for private enterprise, but was extended to some cooperatives. The same thing happened in anglophone Cameroon where cooperatives were appointed as LBAs.
24. Paying at the end of the season reduces the working capital requirements of the UCCAO.
25. In principle the farmers' receipts reflect world prices, for the objective of price stabilization has been largely abandoned.
26. This means that one has to distinguish two kinds of shipments in the port of Douala: those that originate in francophone Cameroon and have to pay a *prélèvement* and those from anglophone Cameroon that are exempt from it.
27. ONCPB, *Rapport Annuel d'Activité 1983/84*, p. 53, mentions that 1416 people were employed in anglophone Cameroon and 940 elsewhere.

28. There are for instance coffee processing factories in Kumba and Fiango.
29. I have heard it said that the ONCPB, as far as francophone Cameroon was concerned, was merely an amalgamation of the five *caisses*. This certainly underrates the significance of the ONCPB but I can understand that some people came to this conclusion.
30. The *hors-standard* is separated from the other cocoa, not only up-country, that is at the first examination by the produce inspectors, but also later in the marketing chain.
31. Food crops such as tubers, root crops and cooking bananas are difficult to control, in any case more difficult than grains such as rice, millet and maize.

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African Studies Centre, Stationsplein 10, 2312 AK Leiden, the Netherlands