

FRANCE HAS FLOODS TOO

Not for fifty years has central France known such devastating floods. The worst rains for years turned the rivers of the Massif Central into raging torrents. Hundreds of buildings have been washed away or undermined. Three people were killed by the collapse of their house; several have been drowned.

At its height the flood swept away bridges, cutting off the hope of rescue by road. And where the steep valleys broaden out, thousands of farmland acres are inundated.

The Chantegrelle Dam, on the River Creuse, showed an alarming crack. For days it seemed likely to burst any moment. Hundreds of families were hurriedly evacuated, out of harm's way. France dared not risk another disaster on the scale of Frejus.

Though safely above the dam the town of Aubusson nevertheless had many streets under water. The place is famous for carpets and tapestries.

It's too soon to estimate the damage, but the total is sure to be staggering. Latest news is that, very slowly, the waters are going down.