

Besides the role of rainfall, the area cultivated with sesame was probably affected by the government's tariff policy. As in the case of olive oil, the importation of sesame seeds was exempt from duty. In 1930, Simpson repeated the complaint by the Johnson-Crosbie Report<sup>88</sup> issued six months earlier on that policy. Simpson said:

Everywhere a demand was made that the import duty on sesame, which had been removed in 1925 in order to help the Jewish oil factory "Shemen" should be reimposed, and the Palestine government has agreed to the reimposition. The sesame position is curious. In 1929, while 3,539 tons were exported at an average price of £P 20.436 mils per ton, 3,470 tons were imported at a price of £P 23.278 mils per ton. The imported sesame comes chiefly from China and is generally said to be an inferior seed to the Palestinian seed.<sup>89</sup>

Similarly, E. R. Sawyer, the director of the Department of Agriculture, Forests, and Fisheries argued:

In the absence of any definite information, it can only be presumed that this free gift to Chinese and Spanish cultivators at the cost of practically the entire Arab agricultural community and, incidentally, of tithe and customs revenue, meets a demand from a few recently established oil mills of dubious financial stability.<sup>90</sup>

Two years previous to this, Sawyer had pointed out that because of the exemptions on sesame imports, production had plummeted from 2,594 tons in 1925 to 1,817 tons in 1926.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>*Survey I*, 311.

<sup>89</sup>Hope-Simpson Report, 103.

<sup>90</sup>E. R. Sawyer to chief secretary, dated 1 April 1929, as quoted in Smith, 174.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, Sawyer to chief secretary, 25 January 1927.