

were able to avoid the usurious rates of moneylenders and substantially reduce their debts or, in some cases, completely eliminate them.⁷ With a little more support, progress could have been achieved in small scale irrigation schemes. The need for the support and encouragement of the government for the formation of cooperative societies to alleviate the conditions of Arab peasants was a recommendation made by different official commissions of inquiry throughout the Mandate period, especially in the 1930s.

Kamen further states that Arab cultivators could have “increased their chances” of getting machinery had they had the organizational tools that European farmers had, namely, a committee that publicized the “lease/lend” program and made recommendations to the government. The Arab farmers applied for the program on an individual basis. While it is true that Arab peasants lacked such a committee, it is also true that government representatives were closely familiar with the different districts of the country and the conditions of peasant communities. The six administrative districts were each headed by a district commissioner. These commissioners were aided by twenty-two deputies and assistant district commissioners in addition to forty-three district officers. Each district administration, which represented the government, kept “a watchful outlook on everything,” including public security and the collection of taxes.⁸ The detailed nature of these two functions kept the government well informed of conditions

⁷*Survey I*, 367-8.

⁸*Ibid.*, 112.