

The tithes are farmed by the Turkish Government to merchants and speculators in the spring of each year, when the ripening crops enable all concerned to estimate the extent and quality of the year's produce. The sale of the tithes (by villages, nahies, or cazas, as may be preferred) commences in March and ends on the 15th June, and whatever tithes then remain unsold the Government undertakes to recover through its own agents.

When the sales are effected the tithe-farmer signs a bond for the amount, payable in six monthly instalments, commencing from the 1st August, with interest on instalments not paid at due date. Each tithe-farmer is required to have a sufficient surety, who also signs the bond and is jointly and equally responsible with the principal. After conclusion of the agreement, the tithe-farmer proceeds at once to watch the fields in which he is interested and to estimate the yield. He sees the grain cut, threshed, heaped, and insists upon its remaining upon the threshing-floor until his claim is satisfied—the claim always exceeding the stipulated tenth. For wheat, barley, and other grains, arrangements have to be made by the cultivators for transit to the nearest port of embarkation, on terms more or less unfavourable to themselves. Their cattle are taken away for transport when most required in their own fields, and they have to bear all the expenses of transit, except the expense of the first mile, which is paid by the tithe-farmers. For fruit, vegetables, and other perishable articles, the tithe is commuted in a money payment, respecting which there are usually disputes, determinable by the local Kaïmakam or head Government official of each caza. The awards of these officials are always in favour of the tithe-farmers, who are members of the Administrative Councils, or otherwise persons of influence in the cazas comprised in their respective engagements. Later in the year, or about the 15th August, the vineyards are similarly visited by the tithe-farmers or their representatives, and estimates of the produce are made by them and by the cultivators. These estimates always differ, and are the subject of constant disputes, which are referred to the Kaïmakam, whose award is generally in favour of the tithe-farmer. As the grape cannot be removed until the claim is settled, the cultivator submits to the exactions of the tithe-farmers rather than risk the deterioration or loss of his stock, and is thus practically mulcted in proportions far exceeding a tenth of the entire produce. The effect of these illegal exactions has been to reduce the cultivation of the grape throughout the island.

But, though keen in their dealings with the peasantry, the tithe-farmers are slow in their own payments to the Government Treasury.