

25. Have you any stock dealers in your district: I suppose you keep a dealer yourself?—No.

26. You do your own buying: it is all the same whether you have a recognised buyer or buy yourself?—Ours is a pure agency business; we get plenty to do without that. We hold sales every day in the week. A good many auctioneers employ dealers, I believe.

27. Do you consider, as a business-man, that there is any necessity—outside of the Timaru district—for this Bill?—I consider that it is necessary throughout the colony. I have seen both stock- and land-sales, and I consider it is necessary in all districts besides the Timaru district.

28. Do you consider that this Bill will prevent the system of “trotting”?—I think, to a large extent it will.

29. Do you not think that clause 2, instead of being in the interest of the dealer, will be detrimental to him?—No.

30. Why should his name be disclosed?—I maintain that there is no man afraid to disclose his name if the stock have come to him rightly.

31. But where is going to be the benefit?—It is a well-known fact that changes in stock are made; and I find it of the greatest importance to give the name of the vendor. Our district is a fairly large one.

32. Now, in the saving clause, line 20, is not that always one of the conditions of sale?—Oh, yes; at present it is a condition of sale, but it is only made for the requirements of the sale.

33. *Hon. the Chairman.*] This clause 3, making it unlawful for the vendor to bid, or to directly or indirectly employ any other person to bid for him: do you think this would stop it?—Well, there are the penalties fixed by that clause.

34. Well, supposing a vendor sent his stock to the sale, and he said to his neighbour, “My price is so-and-so; I will not employ you to bid, but you would get it for that”?—Well, if you knew he was ineligible you would not do it. That is my way of putting it.

35. *Hon. Mr. Duncan.*] Is it a practice in your district for agents or dealers to go round to the stations and farms and have the sheep bought up early in the season?—Yes; there is a large amount of that done.

36. And do they hold these sheep to get prices put up?—Yes, that is so.

37. And they offer them at sales, and bid, and then withdraw them?—Yes, that is so.

38. So ~~putting~~ up the prices on the farmers that there is nothing left for the purchasers: was not that largely what induced your association to try this remedy?—Yes; that and the bogus bidding.

39. *Hon. the Chairman.*] I understand there are two classes of vendors—one might be called dealers or speculators in stock, and the others farmers or *bona fide* breeders: is there a great distinction between the bidding?—From an auctioneer's point of view there should be no distinction between the bidding.

40. *Mr. Lawry.*] Are you aware that the auctioneers pretty frequently advance money to dealers to buy sheep for these sales?—I am aware of it.

41. And do you think this Bill is going to be a solution of the whole difficulty?—I do not say so at all. It will be the means of running sales on sound business lines.

42. Supposing the House passed this Bill, do you think it would be possible for its provisions to be observed and carried out in their entirety?—I do.

43. I understand you to say that you do not approve of the Bill as a whole?—That is, with the exception of one clause.

*Mr. Lawry:* Well, as a matter of fact, there are only two clauses in the Bill—the others are all machinery clauses.

44. *Mr. Bollard.*] Do you know that in Auckland the auctioneers advertise all their sales?

*Hon. Mr. Duncan:* Do they do that on ordinary sale-days?

*Mr. Bollard:* In Waikato they do.

MR. THOMAS MITCHELL examined. (No. 2.)

*Mr. Mitchell:* I am afraid that my statement will be considered rather unnecessary after the full evidence which has been given by Mr. Mundel. I am a farmer, and have been an attendant at stock-sales for thirty years. I have noticed that the sales which have been reserve sales have been the much more successful, and it is a great stimulus to a buyer when he knows that fair bidding is going on. It makes him go to his utmost, either to purchase stock or let it pass if it is above his limit. I myself have always had a great objection to “trotting,” for this reason: that it often compels a man to give more than the real value of stock. Under the other system a man will not bid up to more than what he thinks the stock is worth. It is quite true I have expected stock would be passed, being under the impression that you could buy it for less money when the sale was over. I think it does more harm than good.

45. *Mr. Bollard.*] You consider it is simply dishonest?—I do so.

46. *Mr. Massey.*] Are you here on behalf of the Timaru Agricultural Association; and can you tell us what other associations were communicated with?—There were about thirty communicated with; about eighteen replied, and about fourteen approved of the business of this measure. There was none but acknowledged the evil, and there were one or two who did not think it was possible to overcome the evil at present. Auckland was one, Ashburton and Oamaru.

47. You would not have any objections to these associations giving evidence before this Committee?—None.

48. *Mr. Lawry.*] Are you aware that there was a large meeting of auctioneers in Auckland?—I am aware of it from the papers.