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I have been involved in the wool industry in various facets since 1949 when I started work at Younghusbands bulk store. I worked there for five years learning my trade and in later years practicing it.

I then had a few years classing various sheds and working in woolstores in the off season. At the age of 22 I was the youngest permanent wooltraveller ever appointed in Melbourne. I spent the next three years in Shepparton and the North East, following this three years in East Gippsland.

During the next ten years I managed a branch for the Australian Estates Company. After a few years my family and I leased 2000 acres at Traralgon, farming sheep and cattle, which has grown to 3500 acres. Additional to this we farm 2000 acres at Bengworden and 1000 acres at Wuk Wuk, trading as AF Sheridan & Partners. On these farms we run prime lambs, fine and superfine wool and Angus cattle.

This may be a bit long winded but I need to do this to put into perspective the following points:

1. Leave the auction system alone. I have had experience with all types of other methods of changing ownership of wool, 90% of these to growers disadvantage.
2. Wooltravellers are a great cost to the industry and could be dispensed with.
3. The need for wooltravellers would be unnecessary if the modern classers were properly trained, eg at our shearing last year I witnessed a meeting between the contractor, wooltraveller and classer as to how our fine and superfine clip should be classed, at no stage did they involve me! I have probably forgotten more than they collectively, have ever learned. If the classers were properly trained they should walk into a shed and be in CHARGE!!!! Refer The Woolclasser Role x3.1 + 2 +3 in the classers code of practice. During the late 60's the Australian Estates Company decided they would do away with wooltravellers and were going to have Branch Managers do it, during their normal canvas for business. This only lasted for one year unfortunately.
4. A suggestion re wooltravellers stationed in major towns, a wool expert licenced? by all woolbrokers with maybe some small financial assistance from same, would be available on a fee for service basis to assist growers who felt they needed it. That would mean that those of us who do not need this service do not pay. I have estimated this expense with some companies in our area would be in excess \$10 per bale. Our 2% levy, at times exceeds \$10,000 per year, may be better spent having a service such as this.
5. A full scale inquiry re interlotting and bulk classing practices maybe the fraud squad would be the most suitable organization to conduct this.
6. In conclusion leave the auction system alone, train classers better with more emphasis on shed management. I draw your attention to the fact 90% !!! your figures,!!!, is sold through auction, amongst these 90% of woolgrowers, whether the armchair experts like it or not, some of the best business people in the country exist, they would not be still in business if they weren't.