

AUSTRALIAN YEAR OF THE FARMER

Mr BROCK (Frome) (14:48): I congratulate the member for Schubert on bringing this to our attention. The contribution of farmers in all of Australia in the last century has been underestimated, I believe. If you look at some people when they buy something from a supermarket, they do not understand where it comes from. They just get it, go home and put the food on the table and they eat it, and they do not appreciate the hard toil of the farmers over the last century.

In my younger days I lived at Wandearah. It was a very small community but it had lots of small farming allotments. Today, they are dramatically reduced and a large number of allotments are now made into larger allotments. It makes it harder for the communities to survive. I always wanted to be a farmer when I was younger. I thought it was a great lifestyle. I always wanted to be a dairy farmer. My uncle at Bute had a dairy farm, and it was fantastic going there, as well as Greenock and the other areas down there. It was beautiful to go down there to see and milk the cows. Looking back—

The Hon. R.B. Such: Look what happened to Brokie, though.

Mr BROCK: I will not go into Robert Brokenshire; he is a very good man and he is a great farmer. Things have changed: my electorate of Frome has a very diversified unit of agriculture. We have viticulture, we have grain and we also have dairy farming, but unfortunately that is a dying phase. The dairy farming in particular is being wiped out and, before we know it, everything will be coming from overseas. Australia has the greatest opportunity to be the food bowl for Asia. We have so many challenges going forward. There are so many issues there to face and, in particular, the security of water is a big issue.

I congratulate the women over the many years who have supported the husbands and the sons who have been on the farms and looked after them, and they also looked after the shearers when they were in the shearing sheds. You forget about that because the shearers would be there, and the wives, the daughters and the girlfriends would bring the food out and certainly look after those people.

The lack of security with water is only one of the issues. Our farmers have everything going against them. They have nature, world prices and the Australian dollar all as challenges, but they are very resilient and they will not die down. They will continue on. That is why I have great pleasure in being the chair of the select committee into the grain industry, to ensure that we make everything as viable and as streamlined as we can for the grain industry in particular to be able to go forward and to secure that industry, which is very important not only to South Australia but all over Australia.

I will close on this matter but, again, I congratulate all our farmers throughout all of Australia, in South Australia in particular, and again I congratulate the member for Schubert for bringing this to the attention of the house. I certainly endorse the motion and congratulate all our farmers across all of Australia.