

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

not in any way alter the arguments put forward by the hon. member. I do not want to take issue with him too strongly because this is a very serious matter. It is a fact that we are encountering difficult competition in the international marketing situation. However, markets are turning more orderly, and I think that with a little patience, courage and resolution we will work out of this situation.

I do want to refer to the hon. member's remarks concerning the government's attitude toward the continuation of the price structure under the old international wheat agreement. If I can interpret the attitude of western farmers, they spoke to us unani- mously in requesting us to never again enter into an extension of the international wheat agreement, particularly that part that applies to the price structure. Despite the fact that prices are lower now than they were several months ago, they are still considerably higher than the minimum under the old international wheat agreement.

On previous occasions I have heard one or two hon. members, and I think one in particular from the opposite side, say that the price structure under the international wheat agreement should have been carried through. I again checked with farm organizations in western Canada, farm communities and the wheat board, and I could find no support whatever for that view. In fact, had we adhered to the old price structure it would have been quite impossible to negotiate the new price structure that will prevail under the Kennedy round agreement which, as my hon. friend well knows, moves the range up

21 cents over the old price range. I dispute the validity of my hon. friend's argument on that point.

• (10:30 p.m.)

I do want to say that the legislation to which he refers has been effectively used by the western farm community. I have some interesting statistics here to show the use to which it was put. The maximum utilization was made of it in the crop year 1960-61 when \$64 million were drawn down in cash advances by the farmers. The next highest year was 1963-64, when \$62 million were drawn down. For the other years since it was put into effect, from 1957-1958 until the present time, amounts drawn down have varied from \$16.5 million, approximately, to the high figure I mentioned.

At this time I wish to commend the farm community for its excellent record of repayment. As to the current situation, the normal, average draw down of individuals varies from \$700 to \$992—say \$1,000 in round figures. This year the average draw down has been \$1,139, and as of November 3, 1967 the total draw down was \$35,713,000. Viewed in the light of the high figure I mentioned for other years, the program is operating well within itself. We are watching it closely and are studying the statistics on a day to day basis.

My position at the moment is as I stated it to be when replying to a question. We are observing the situation closely.

Motion agreed to and the house adjourned at 10.34 p.m.