

those whom we have lost. Our hearts go out to those who lost family and loved ones and we pray that memories of happier times will sustain and console them in the very difficult moments which lie ahead.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of members of the NDP caucus to express our deepest sympathy and condolences to those who suffered during that very tragic day, July 31, in Edmonton. We feel for the families who suffered losses and for those who today lie injured in hospitals, as well as those trying to put their homes and families back together again.

One of the very impressive things which occurred as a result of the disaster was the way Albertans responded with an unprecedented amount of generosity and compassion to the victims of this disaster. That response was something to behold. I believe all of us were moved when we heard through the media about the generosity of individuals, families, communities and agencies coming together to assist those in need as a result of this tragic and violent natural phenomenon.

We are reminded by this disaster how violent nature can be and the rack and ruin which can occur to communities in a very few moments. While it is of course impossible for man to stop a natural disaster like this, we are able to respond and provide assistance for those who suffer. In this respect I would like to think that we will one day soon hear specific financial commitments by the Government so that those who are suffering as a result of this tragic situation will know that the federal Government will provide full financial support to help them get back on their feet.

I think this also points out the tremendous need for legislation to establish a fund which will automatically cost share with provincial or territorial Governments during these crises so that there is no question that immediate financial support is made available to assist those who have experienced tragic losses.

I also want to use this moment, and I am sure I speak for all Members of the House, to refer to the tragic situation on July 14 in Montreal. We are well aware of the tremendous flooding that occurred there which caused \$229 million in losses. We again look forward to a commitment by the federal Government to provide funds to assist the 21,000 people who were victims of that serious flooding.

Again, to those in Montreal and in Edmonton, on behalf of the NDP caucus I extend our deepest sympathy and condolences to the victims and their families.

Mr. Speaker: I know Hon. Members would want to rise for an appropriate minute's silence.

[Editor's Note: Whereupon the House stood in silence.]

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES NEGOTIATIONS—BINDING DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISM

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, for two years now the federal Government has been selling out our country bit by bit, sector by sector, in the course of its free trade negotiations with the U.S. Leading American Senators are now reminding us once again that there will be no binding mechanism to solve trade disputes between our two countries, and there will be no exemption from American trade remedy law in order to satisfy Canada in these negotiations.

My question to the Prime Minister is this. Will he again guarantee to this House that there will be no trade deal with the U.S. unless there is a binding trade dispute mechanism and Canada is given meaningful exemption from trade remedy laws under the Act of 1974 and under current legislation now before the U.S. Congress?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think my right hon. friend would acknowledge that I have set out that view on many occasions in and out of this House regarding those kinds of provisions. We are working towards that end. Obviously there are different points of view concerning this among members of the U.S. Senate, as there are among Members of this House of Commons. The Government is pursuing the negotiations very actively attempting to secure a comprehensive agreement which will meet all the required provisions.

[Translation]

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's voice is so soft that he does not really have an answer.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN QUEBEC—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has dismantled our regional development programs to accommodate American interests during the free trade negotiations. We now find ourselves without a national program of regional development. The Government has totally abandoned Quebec. Is the Prime Minister prepared to sacrifice the development of Abitibi, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean or Beauce just to please the Americans?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the unemployment rate in the Quebec regions mentioned by my hon. friend has been declining ever since this Government took office.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!