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sudden when we passed through these doors that we would become venture capitalists with the ability to pick winners and losers in the marketplace. It did not happen.

Mrs. Georgette Sheridan (Saskatoon—Humboldt): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this topic which is so important to a large number of Quebecers. I would like to thank the hon. member opposite for focusing attention on the future of the defence industry. It is an industry which over the years has provided much employment in the province of Quebec and will continue to do so.

The future prosperity of the defence industry is vital to the future prosperity of Quebec. As a vibrant part of Canada and North America, Quebec and its industry can keep pace with global change and technological advancement.

I applaud the interest of the member in raising this question and I would like to speak for a few minutes on this important matter.

[Translation]

The Quebec defence industry is made up of many small companies and fewer than 20 medium to large ones, the vast majority of sales being made by the latter.

All these companies, small and large alike, have seen their defence sales dwindle over the past few years. In light of the falling business activity on the defence markets, it is reasonable to assume that this trend could well persist.

[English]

European markets for defence sales have dropped remarkably, leading to a loss of 150,000 jobs over the last three years. That is 10 per cent of the workforce in the aerospace and defence sector.

In America, the experience is similar, with large reductions in military procurement matched by significant job losses, more than 3,000 in the last three years. Both European and American industries have been faced with a serious industrial adjustment problem.

In various countries, government has responded in various ways. It is tempting to look to solutions such as those proposed in the United States for the problems facing Quebec's aerospace and defence industry.

I believe we can learn from others. I am confident that some of the lessons we might learn from others in defence industrial conversion are universally acceptable. For example, there are a number of internal and external obstacles to diversification and defence conversion.

These include a narrow client base, lack of experience in export and commercial markets, over-engineered products and small product runs. External obstacles include shrinking global

defence markets, difficulty in attracting capital and market protectionism among others.

The various approaches adopted world-wide by governments to deal with their defence industrial conversion problem all address these common elements but the approaches are often tailored to the particular circumstances unique to their particular defence industries.

As a general rule, none of these programs envisage getting out of military markets. Instead the first goal of diversification is normally to retain a viable industrial base. Many governments have approached this question as a regional or community issue focusing their support accordingly.

Many have formed committees involving all of the stakeholders concerned including government, trade unions and industry. The so-called dual use technologies, commercial and military, are often a criterion for government R and D support.

One key objective of all these programs is to maintain knowledge, intensive industries and the high quality, high technology employment which is part of it.

The Speaker: The hon. member has just begun her statement and she will have priority when we resume debate.

It being 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

SPINAL HEALTH WEEK

Mr. Ted McWhinney (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the week of May 1 to May 7, 1994 is Spinal Health Week. The program was established in 1985 to initiate and maintain good spinal health habits in children.

It is sponsored annually by the Ontario Chiropractic Association, a voluntary membership organization that represents more than 1,350 Ontario chiropractors. Its objective is to provide public education and promote research to improve the quality of health care for the citizens of Ontario.

Eight out of ten Canadians suffer from back pain during their lifetime. The incidence is increasing. A healthy lifestyle including proper posture, exercise and good nutrition is the key to prevention.

Please join me in wishing the Ontario Chiropractic Association a very successful Spinal Health Week.