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THE LATE BERNARD LANDRY, G.O.Q.

Statement by:

The Honourable Diane Bellemare

Wednesday, November 7, 2018

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[Translation]

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Hon. Diane Bellemare (Legislative Deputy to the Government Representative in the Senate): Colleagues, yesterday, Quebec lost one of its great visionaries. After 50 years spent shaping Quebec's history, Bernard Landry passed away at the age of 81.

Tributes are pouring in, both in the traditional media and on social media. Friends and foes alike are acknowledging his immense contribution to the development of Quebec.

The Premier of Quebec, François Legault, has announced that Bernard Landry will be honoured with a state funeral, adding, "Quebec has lost a great man, a loyal servant of the nation, a man with a strong sense of duty."

Bernard Landry was a colleague of mine at the university. During what he called his "intellectual interludes" in between stints in the National Assembly, he taught at UQAM's School of Management, where I was also teaching. Thanks to our shared passion for economics, our paths crossed many times over the course of our respective careers. We often discussed job strategies for Quebec.

His goal was always to make Quebec stronger, and he succeeded in many respects. He was a forward-thinking leader who played an instrumental role in the development of Quebec's technology industry and its digital and video game sector, especially in Montreal.

Bernard Landry was a strong advocate for open markets. He wrote books on the topic and helped promote free trade agreements for Canada, including NAFTA. He also helped convince Quebecers of the merits of the Mulroney government's open trade strategy.

He often said that in the word "international" is the word "national" and he spoke about the Québécois nation with extraordinary open-mindedness.

He was a great orator and had such a strong command of the language of Molière that every topic he tackled became interesting.

Bernard Landry also knew how to bring people together and how to negotiate respectfully with First Nations. He was the architect of the Peace of the Braves, which, to this day, serves as model around the world.

He led about a dozen departments throughout his career, mostly related to economics. Throughout the 1990s, Bernard Landry became the most powerful minister in the history of Quebec. He served as deputy premier, Vice-Chair of the Executive Council, Minister of State for the Economy, Minister of Finance, Minister of Revenue and Minister of Industry, Trade, Science and Technology. He later became Premier of Quebec.

I commend his sense of duty, his intellectual rigour and his open-mindedness. On top of all that, Bernard Landry was straightforward and approachable — truly an exceptional man.

I offer my sincere condolences to his family and friends.
