

New MPs excited to be dual voices for one Aurora



By Brock Weir

They still have to pin down locations for their new constituency offices, but Aurora's newly-minted Members of Parliament Leona Alleslev and Kyle Peterson are already working from the same playbook: one Canada, one country, one Aurora.

‘But, with two voices,’ jokes Ms. Alleslev, MP for Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill.

It has been a busy few weeks since the October 19 Federal Election which sent these two rookie MPs to Ottawa to be Aurora's voices in the two ridings which serve it.

Mr. Peterson, MP for Newmarket-Aurora, was in Ottawa just last week to be officially sworn in on the job and Ms. Alleslev will follow suit this Monday, November 23.

‘Something about the swearing in makes it concrete and real,’ says Mr. Peterson.

Add Ms. Alleslev: ‘I took an oath to join the Canadian Forces and I am very excited about this next oath when I will actually have the weight of the office on me. I am excited because it is an honour to be able to serve and I don’t take that responsibility lightly.’

Since Election Day, the MPs have been busy assembling their team, receiving orientation and hearing from constituents. Mr. Peterson says invitations to community events have been flying in fast and furious, with his dance card filling up even on the day immediately after the election, and constituents have not been shy about sounding off on the issues that matter to them.

‘Canada Post didn’t do us any favours the Monday after the election saying they were basically putting everything on hold,’ says Mr. Peterson. ‘It seems that the community that was most affected by that decision was Aurora just because of the timing and the way things were being rolled out. A couple of people have come up to me with some immigration problems and everyone has a lot of ideas right now and it is nice to hear from them. It runs the gamut, for sure.’

Both MPs watched with pride as the new Prime Minister's cabinet was sworn in at Rideau Hall. There was a certain energy in the air, they say, with enthusiasm etched on Mr. Trudeau's face.

‘It represents a step change,’ says Ms. Alleslev. ‘This is a government of the people, not only in terms of the diversity and the depth of cabinet by simply of virtue of making it open and accessible. This is starting as we mean to go on: a government that believes they are of the people and for the people and the people, therefore, have the opportunity and the privilege of being able to see that and that was exciting [of the swearing-in]. You can feel the energy of ‘we want to be part of our government and we want to be part

of the future we are building together.'?

But as high as energy is at the moment, both MPs concede there are challenges ahead. The Liberals have set the bar high and now it is time for them to deliver both nation-wide and in the two ridings these individuals now represent.

'The biggest challenge is going to be the ambitious platform we have put forward and being able to demonstrate that we can make good on it in a timely fashion,' says Ms. Alleslev. 'There has been a perception that governments move slowly but at this point we don't have the luxury of time. We have a high unemployment rate, we have an economy that that is perhaps not as strong as we would like it to be, we have a global environment that is providing its own challenges, so we do not have the luxury of time. We have fantastic plans and approaches, now we have to demonstrate in a timely fashion that we can make good on those and start the ball rolling to make sure we end up with the results we are looking for from these initiatives.'

Adds Mr. Peterson: 'It is clear now the budget probably wasn't in as good a shape as we might have thought hearing the Conservative position during the election, so there is going to be an additional economic challenge of a budget that probably wasn't balanced after all. We're starting from a step behind than we would have thought.'

'But perhaps we had a feeling it wasn't going to be as optimistic and positive as we thought,' interjects Ms. Alleslev with a smile. 'We are more than ready or that, but we literally have to hit the ground running.'

The Auroran's bi-weekly space for Aurora's Members of Parliament to communicate with you resumes next week. Mr. Peterson and Ms. Alleslev will take it in turns with Mr. Peterson getting the ball rolling in our November 26 edition.