

Aurora's Aidan Slind -- On Her Majesty's Service

By Brock Weir

This Monday is Victoria Day and while many Canadians might be raising a few beers to mark the unofficial start of the summer, Aurora's Aidan Slind is probably raising a glass to mark the Queen's Official Canadian Birthday.

Mr. Slind, a former member of the Queen's York Rangers Army Cadet Corps, says he "can't really say for sure" where his interest in the Crown came from, but it is an interest that led him last summer into the corridors of power and into the very heart of the Crown in Ontario.

A student at the University of Toronto, Mr. Slind is an active member of the Monarchist League of Canada. Through the League, he won the coveted spot as summer intern at Queen's Park in the office of the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, the Queen's representative in the province.

"More than any sense of personal accomplishment, I was just honoured that I would have a chance to play a role - admittedly, a very small role - in an institution that goes back hundreds of years in this Province and that I would be able to walk the halls and go to events that have been walked and attended by a great many Ontarians throughout our history, and that I would get to work to further the work of that institution I believe so strongly in," Mr. Slind told The Auroran on May 5. "It was mostly a feeling of being honoured to be a part of something much bigger than myself."

By the time he arrived at Queen's Park for the first day on the job, it was very much a matter of hitting the ground running. Assigned very clear tasks on the very first day, he was off to events with Lieutenant-Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell on the second, and this became very much a part of the routine. Accompanying Ms. Dowdeswell on a number of engagements, he was particularly thrilled to accompany the Lieutenant-Governor to Aurora last summer where she presided over the Rangers' annual cadet inspection at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex. And, among those inspected, was Mr. Slind's younger brother.

"One of the good things about the internship is because there is only one intern you actually do meaningful work in the office," he says. "I had friends, for example, who were working internships with the Federal Government over the summer where they would just be pushing pencils because they couldn't find enough jobs for the number of interns. Because there was only one of me, I was doing all manner of things from communications to event planning - and I got to be with Her Honour with my brother on parade, which was very special thing for me. You're not just one cog in a very big machine."

"One thing I felt very special about the Lieutenant-Governor's suite is that people are very aware of the office in which they work for and, to some degree, represent, of its history, its traditions and they conduct themselves accordingly. It was a fascinating environment to work in to say the absolute least and there were leaders from all aspects of Ontarian public life who came to the suite, figures from the military and civil service, leaders in the Aboriginal communities, and leaders of every civil society organization."

Sometimes being on the inside of an organization which you have admired so long from the outside can be a daunting task, ultimately shaping your view of the institution. This is the case for Mr. Slind, who comes away from the experience with nothing but positive things to say about the Crown and the woman representing it.

"It gave me a better understanding of what it takes to give people on the outside the impression they have," he says. "You really do see what it takes to uphold an institution that is held to such high esteem by people like me. The pace at which [Ms. Dowdeswell] works is astounding. I talk about the staff having very high professional standards, but Her Honour has standards as high or higher, but she is also a very considerate person to work for who understood the needs of the team. Very high energy, great attention to detail, very considerate to her staff, she is a very engaging person to be around."

"Too often we think of government as Federal, Provincial, municipal in descending order of importance but, in reality, they are all

critical to the way our lives work. Even though I was in an apolitical office, I got a fantastic view of just how important the Provincial government is.?