

New appointment brings MP's career full circle



By Brock Weir

Having been sworn in late last month, Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Leona Alleslev was sworn in once again this past Monday, this time taking on a new challenge within the House of Commons: Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement.

Ms. Alleslev was appointed to the position by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on December 2, where she will work with Minister Judy Foote to set new performance standards for government purchasing.

For Ms. Alleslev, a retired Air Force Logistics Officer, the appointment brings her full circle back to her early 20s when she first entered the Canadian Armed Forces.

"I joined the Air Force as a Logistics Officer and in the Canadian Forces, logistics is supply chain management, transportation, finance and food services," she says. "Within supply chain management, it is inventory management, warehousing distribution, procurement and contract management. That is actually where I started my career. The government trained me in terms of how large systems are procured and maintained and at my first posting I was responsible for all the warehouses on the base.

"As a 23-year-old, I had a \$50 million budget in which I was responsible for aircraft supplies, as well as lumber for the Navy in Esquimalt, aviation fuel, as well as truck parts, pens and paper and clothing."

In this early position, Ms. Alleslev says she was able to recognize things the government could be doing better and in her next posting, she was off to National Defence Headquarters to look at introducing best practices and alternative service delivery mechanisms within the Canadian practices, visiting air force bases in the United States, Europe, Australia and New Zealand to develop benchmarks in large-scale government procurement programs.

"I am obviously very humbled to have been given this appointment and I am greatly looking forward to working with a fantastic Minister and a great department," says Ms. Alleslev of her new posting. "I have a passion for government services and procurement and I am really looking forward to the opportunity to focus more on accountability, transparency and performance-based incentivized contracting as we modernize how our government delivers these services."

Incentives, she adds, are key to ensuring the government gets what it is contracted for and that industries look "outside the box" to increase performance, shorten timeframes, and reduce costs.

?Any time you can get the industry to look at things that are going to be in their best interests, as well as the best interests of the government, then you essentially have a win-win situation and a more effective delivery of services, which is what you want your government to do,? she says.

Ms. Alleslev's appointment was just 48 hours before the Governor General delivered the Speech from the Throne. It was a ?fabulous? day, she says, and one which was steeped in history.

?The most important thing about the Speech from the Throne is I believe it is one of the key points where you are connected with the past history and aligning the vision for where you are going,? she says. ?You have the pomp and circumstance, the history and ceremony that connects you to hundreds of years of the institution and the Monarchy and the Government and you are reminded just what an auspicious responsibility it is. That truly is a powerful feeling and why I wanted to be a part of this government and to serve my country in this role.

?What an exciting time this is. What a positive, energized environment it is. Canadians are optimistic and hopeful and I would say even excited about the possibilities of the future and what we can achieve together. It is palpable and I have felt it in this whole week of being here.?