

Speaking Notes

The Honourable Noël A. Kinsella
Speaker of the Senate

On the occasion of the retirement of Admiral McFadden

Ottawa
July 21, 2011

Vice Admiral McFadden,
Mrs. McFadden,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome all of you this evening to these historic chambers in the Centre Block of our Parliament. When Her Majesty the Queen is on Parliament Hill, these rooms are Hers. The majority of the time, they are the domain of the Speaker of the Senate.

This is certainly an appropriate place for a gathering of naval personnel, given the role of our Sovereign, and I am sure you have noted the paintings of Canadian warships are well suited to the occasion. The navy is also evoked by the floors, which are made of broad boards of teak, separated by thin strips of inlaid ebony, similar in appearance to a ship's deck.

There are also Latin inscriptions carved into the woodwork over the doors, and I would particularly draw your attention to that on the south wall which reads: "Sapere aude", or "Dare to be prudent." While different people may have different understandings of the intent, I think naval personnel will take its meaning well.

Following dinner, we will have the usual round of toasts and come to the purpose of this gathering, which is to congratulate and thank Vice Admiral Dean McFadden for his remarkable service to the nation. I do want to note at this point that Vice Admiral Maddison's wife, Fay, is celebrating a landmark birthday today. It is my intention to follow the dictates of the inscription just mentioned and will thus refrain from mentioning the specific number, falling back on the widely agreed standard of "29 or thereabouts".

In closing, I would like to point out that we have a place this evening for the "missing sailor". We have much to celebrate, but I ask that we also remember those who cannot be present. With that, I invite you to raise your glasses in a toast: "may the members of our Navy and all gathered here always enjoy fair winds and following seas."

INTRODUCTION OF VICE ADMIRAL McFADDEN AFTER DINNER

Many dignitaries, diplomats and foreign officials have been received in these rooms and have been reminded of our strong naval history and traditions. Tonight, we are gathered to celebrate the distinguished career of one of our own leaders, Vice Admiral Dean McFadden.

His career began at the Royal Roads Military College, continued through every level of command and culminated in the assumption of the responsibilities of Chief of the Maritime Staff and Commander of the Navy in 2009. That placed him in the hot seat during the Navy's centennial year, where he worked diligently to highlight the history and achievements of our maritime forces, while continuing the work on fleet modernization and replacement. After 37 years of dedicated service, he is moving on to other challenges and I am sure the Canadian Navy will miss his strong presence.

One thing that is certain is that his family and particularly his wife, Eva, will be able to enjoy more time with him. I now invite Admiral McFadden to say a few words.