

Jelinek tells supporters he's moving on — not retiring

By **BARB JOY**
Special to *The Champion*

After more than 20 years in public office, MP Otto Jelinek bade a fond farewell to politics and his Progressive Conservative supporters Monday night at Le Dome restaurant in Oakville.

It was obvious they were reluctant to see him go. As Mr. Jelinek took centre stage to deliver his farewell speech, more than 200 members of the Oakville-Milton Federal Progressive Conservative Association rose in a standing ovation.

Casting aside his notes, Mr. Jelinek said he would "speak from the heart."

After paying tribute to his wife, Leata, and his secretary, Sandra Lee Cudmore, and thanking them for their support during good times and bad, Mr. Jelinek explained he was quitting the political arena to spend more time with his wife and two sons, aged five and 10.

But, at 53, he was not retiring, he said. He was simply leaving politics to take up another career, as yet undisclosed.

Mr. Jelinek said he was "a proud member" of a government that has been tough enough to make "necessary structured changes" in a time when changes were essential for the growth and stability of Canada. They included deregulation, tax reform, cutting government spending and trimming the bureaucracy in Ottawa, all instituted since the PC government took office in 1984 and further expanded in Monday's federal budget.

"In a world-wide recession — and I emphasize worldwide — we needed changes," he said. "And we did it before other countries did."

He was in no doubt that these measures had paid off. World



Otto Jelinek

monitoring agencies such as the International Monetary Fund have predicted that Canada will come out of the recession in better shape than other countries and initial indications support this prediction, he said. For instance, Canada's trade has now reached "record heights."

Mr. Jelinek called on the next PC government to "bring us into the next generation" by building on the foundation set down by the current administration.

But the next generation is not in need of old faces in parliament he

said.

"My friend (Liberal Leader) Jean Chretien was in the House of Commons when Harold MacMillan was prime minister of Britain," he noted.

Before his speech, Mr. Jelinek was introduced to members by a video outlining the highlights of his life and career. Born in 1940 in Prague, Czechoslovakia, Mr. Jelinek was nine when his family escaped from that country after the Communists moved in. Thirteen years later, he returned to Prague to skate with his sister Maria, in an Olympic competition, winning a gold medal for Canada.

He exchanged his skating career for a political one in the early 1970s and became an outspoken member of parliament and cabinet minister, holding portfolios in Fitness Youth and Amateur Sport, Supply and Services and finally National Revenue.

Of all the highlights of his life in Canada — running a successful business at Jelinek Cork Ltd. in Oakville, winning a gold medal in the Olympics, being elected to the House of Commons — Mr. Jelinek pointed to one of special importance to him.

"The proudest moment of all was at 15, receiving my Canadian citizenship," he said.

The video ended with his resounding interpretation of what Canada means to him, "a land of opportunity and freedom for all where families can live with dignity and hope."

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Cost to members is \$20 and \$25 to non-members. Registration deadline is Monday, May 3. Call the Chamber at 878-0581 to book a spot.

Some of the areas covered in the last phase of the report include the fate of downtown Milton, the location of new urban areas, green space and population density.

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