

Economic forecaster predicts Milton will be busy

By **KIM ARNOTT**
Special to *The Champion*

If you're the claustrophobic type, Tom McCormack has little good news for you. He says life in Milton is only going to get more congested over the next 25 years.

In fact, the economic forecaster predicts that the Toronto area, including Halton, will see the country's fastest growth rate over the next decade, with population growth of about 15 per cent.

The hordes of people rushing to move into the area won't be drawn by the green spaces or the cultural events, but mainly by the jobs.

It's all part of what Mr. McCormack describes as the "increasing urbanization of the population."

In the 1930's, about 35 per cent of all Canadian jobs were on the farm. Today, agriculture supplies only 3.5 per cent of all the jobs in the country.

When they left the land, people followed the jobs to the cities. And they're still following the jobs, says Mr. McCormack, founder and president of Oakville-based Strategic Projections Inc.

British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario have seen rapid population growth over the last decade, as job seekers from less prosperous parts of the country flood their borders.

And that trend is likely to continue, particularly in the urban areas of Toronto and Vancouver, where most of the jobs will be created.

Mr. McCormack, who was outlining his vision of Canada in the 2021 for the Oakville chapter of the Canadian Federation of

University Women recently, also expects the country will hit zero natural population growth in the next 25 years.

Currently, there are about 200,000 more births than deaths each year, said Mr. McCormack.

But with the aging of the baby boomer generation, the number of yearly deaths is expected to almost double.

"We will ultimately reach no population growth," predicted Mr. McCormack.

By the year 2021, he expects immigration to provide the country's only source of population growth. And as immigration from diverse areas of the world grows, the face of Canada's face will become increasingly multicultural, he said.

For entrepreneurs, technology and the aging population will provide plenty of small business opportunities. Along with health

care, small business is the fastest growing segment of the economy, growing by about 70 per cent over the last decade.

But tomorrow's employees will have to be prepared for a rapidly changing workplace, he warned.

"It is increasingly likely they will not only change employers, but careers," said Mr. McCormack.

Young people shouldn't be overly glum about the future, however. Continued increases in productivity will drive an improvement in the Canadian standard of living, said Mr. McCormack.

He predicts the next 25 years will see productivity growth of about 1.5 per cent each year. That is roughly equivalent to the productivity growth over the last 30 years, and will translate into an increasingly high standard of living. "It's an exciting future but it's a challenging one," said Mr. McCormack.

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New stores open at Milton Mall tomorrow

A touch of spring will be coming to the Milton Mall this weekend — spring time fashions that is.

Tomorrow (Saturday) will mark the grand opening of three new retail clothing stores in the mall. Cleo, the previous Irene Hill, will be displaying their new spring lines of women's fashions while Ricki's Fashions will cater to the young at heart and Bootleggers will be a new addition of unisex fashions for casual wear.

These three outlets will represent more than 9,000 square feet of new retail space in the mall. The grand openings will also feature a chance to win one of three \$100 gift certificates.

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