



### **Only Speed and Imagination Can Solve The Climate Crisis**

We've all seen the faces. The exhausted, care worn, frightened faces of people who have spent days breathing in the ash filled smoke of wildfires, while praying the winds don't change and rain will come just in the nick of time.

But when the prayers don't work, and your town is just 400 metres away from a wildfire that covers 46 sq. kilometers you get into your car, on a bus or an airplane and get the hell out.

Journalists call them "evacuees." What they really are is climate refugees, people forced flee their homes to escape disasters that are far from "natural;" disasters which scientists have been warning us about for decades, ones that are being driven, in large part, by a vast, human-driven planetary change. A change in the global climate fueled by our addiction to oil and gas.

One result is bigger more intense wildfires that race across forests and grasslands at speeds up to 22 kms an hour. Once they reach a critical mass and intensity those fires then go on to create their own weather systems. Pyrocumulus clouds form which can generate thunderstorms and lightning strikes that further extend the fire, while the heat of the blaze itself creates its own wind, which in turn, can produce fire whirls - essentially tornadoes of fire.



Pyrocumulonimbus clouds are thunder clouds created by intense heat on the Earth's surface like climate driven wildfires that can reach temperatures above 800°C .

And after 20 days of fires burning or igniting in every region of Manitoba, our Premier, Wab Kinew, finally named this fire season for what it is: “a sign of a changing climate that we are going to have to adapt to.”

He's right, at least in part - climate adaptation is important. But halting the progress of the climate change that's driving these disasters – whether wildfires, collapsing glaciers, drought or catastrophic flooding – is even more essential.

That can only happen if every level of government in Canada puts its shoulder to the wheel and stops tinkering around with a little change here and a little change there. Because it's as clear to me, as it is to world's climate scientists, that we're long past the stage where incremental change can solve this crisis.

We need to address the cause of the climate crisis head on, and what that will require is both speed and a leap of imagination.

The same level of speed the Trudeau government exhibited when it announced the Canada Emergency Response Benefit in March 2020 and less than a month later delivered cheques to those in need during the pandemic lockdown.

The same kind of imaginative leap our wartime Prime Minister, William Lyon MacKenzie King, made when Canada, Great Britain and Europe were faced with a world war and the global threat of fascism. His government, with the help of businessman and politician, CD

Howe, transformed Canada from an agrarian based economy to an industrialized one over the course of the war.



C D Howe and a WW2 Canadian aircraft Factory

To achieve that goal, top private sector managers worked for the government for a dollar a day supported by their company payroll. And from 1940 to the end of the war excess profits were taxed at 75-95% and corporate taxes were increased so that “no man should find himself richer at the end of the war than he was at the beginning.”

So, what would happen if we used that same speed and level of imagination to transform Canada from a fossil fuel based economy to a clean energy one? What if Wab Kinew, Canada’s favorite premier joined with the world’s favorite banker, PM Mark Carney, to sit down and draft a battle plan to address climate change that would speed us into a better, safer future?

It's not impossible when you consider the precedents set for fast, radical government action. And who knows, by retooling, re-educating workers and recruiting the best and brightest to government to lead a just, clean energy revolution, we might just beat the Trump tariff crisis at the same time.

But here’s the thing - we need to tell our governments that they need to act now and quickly to address the climate crisis. And we need to tell them that not once, not twice, but again and again.

We also need to own the fact that we, as a society and culture, are all culpable in this crisis. That our over consumption, our social media fed fantasy-like expectations and disproportionate sense of privilege has helped land us in this mess.

We and our governments seem to have misplaced the notion of the need for common sacrifice to achieve a greater common good. I very much hope we can find it again. Otherwise the fires, the floods and the global droughts we're now experiencing will just keep coming and they'll keep getting worse.

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