

September 20, 2024

The 7:06 a.m. version of the story said, "A fire has destroyed the iconic Red Bridge in Kamloops" and that "Flames engulfed the historic structure early Thursday morning, and by sunrise it was largely gone."

Fire Chief Ken Uzeloc said it's a "devastating loss" to the community, and is a "major part of the history of Kamloops."

Witnesses said they were woken by the sound of the fire at the 88-year-old wooden road bridge, which connected the city's downtown with the Tk'emlúps Indian Band reserve and an industrial park across the South Thompson River.

Capt. Norm Little with Kamloops Fire Rescue said firefighters were called to the blaze around 3:10 a.m. PT. He confirmed the roadway of the bridge had collapsed into the river.

Uzeloc said the fire started at about 3 a.m.

"The origin and cause investigation hasn't started yet," Uzeloc said. "Crews are just in the process of mopping up the fire and making sure parts of the bridge that remain are out. The fire seems to have started near the middle of the bridge."

The City of Kamloops said the Red Bridge is significant for its historical, cultural and economic values.

It's a wooden Howe truss road bridge built in 1936 that spans the South Thompson River. It connects the City of Kamloops to the TKTk'emlúps/Kamloops Indian Band's Reserve and industrial park and provides alternative access to the Yellowhead Highway and North Thompson District.

The current bridge is the third wooden truss bridge located at this site.

The first bridge was built in 1887. It was named the Government Bridge but colloquially called the Red Bridge.

Kamloops Mayor Reid Hamer-Jackson said the Red Bridge, less than two kilometres west of the Highway 5 crossing over the South Thompson River,

was regularly used by commuters and semi-trucks and had long needed repair.

"I'm not sure how many vehicles go across, but I'm sure it's huge," said Hamer-Jackson, who added he hopes the bridge can be rebuilt.

This bridge is only one of hundreds of Canadian structures vandalized, defaced, or destroyed since mid-2021.

According to *Blacklocks Reporter*, earlier this week, Canada's Cabinet confirmed hundreds of church burnings nationwide together with a sharp rise in arson attacks following the May 27, 2021, claim based on ground penetrating radar (GPR) that the remains of children were discovered beside the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in Kamloops, B.C.

Church-burning data were drawn from police reports compiled by Statistics Canada.

"This includes incidents that occurred on the surrounding property such as an attached cemetery or adjacent parking lot or inside a religious institution or building," cabinet wrote in an *Inquiry Of Ministry* tabled in the Commons. The figures were tabled at the request of Conservative MP Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows-Maple Ridge, B.C.), who asked, "What are the statistics related to incidents of burning places of worship?"

The *Inquiry* counted 423 police-reported incidents at places of worship since 2015, the year the Truth and Reconciliation Commission published a report claiming 4,100 children died at Indian Residential Schools. Arson attacks before the 2015 report averaged as few as 13 a year.

Police counted 90 arson attacks in 2021, the same year the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc First Nation of Kamloops announced the "discovery" of 215 children's graves hidden at a Residential School site. No remains have ever been recovered despite a \$7.9 million federal grant for fieldwork.

Kamloops Indian Band officials have recently renamed these "remains" as "anomalies," i.e., soil disturbances of unknown contents. In GPR terminology, "anomalies" do not even rise to the level of "targets of interest." Moreover, GPR is a technique that is only reliable when employed in known cemeteries.

**Now, bridge-burning seems to have been added to this mindless destruction.**