

LETTERS

Sir:

Concerning Ottawa's 3000-lb. "chunk of metal", I wish to bring your readers up to date as to the current status of the mystery of the true nature of this artifact.

A sample of the metal has been in a federal government laboratory in Ottawa for well over one year. The only report received so far concerning the analyses conducted was a simple statement in a letter to the effect that it is "manganese steel, probably the ladle residues from several heats at a foundry". This statement was made one month after receipt of the metal by the laboratory. Fourteen months have since passed and I am still awaiting a copy of the official lab report specifying the analyses conducted, the findings, etc. The latest word is that this information will be published in a scientific publication. Just when this may happen was not stated.

In the meantime, several other independent analyses are also being conducted on other samples of the same artifact. When all these are complete, a comparison of all reports will be made.

Until then, rest assured that positive and very firm efforts are being made to settle this controversial matter. I will report again at a later date.

Arthur Bray,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Sir:

There are references in your Fall, 1970, issue to the "chunk of metal" at Ottawa that demand comment. I was present in Ottawa with members of the Ottawa New Sciences Club when Mr. Matthews examined (?) the metal. His statements in your article are -- when taking into consideration the way in which the metal was found, plus the state of the metal -- idiotic.

The metal mass measures 70½ by 54 by 24 inches. It is very dense and heavy -- very ragged. It is in layers, having apparently gone through intense heat and a very heavy impact. I have been used to hard work and have been exercising for the past 35 years, so I know that it was not easy to break off the few pieces that I have. The shape is unusual and bears no heavy seaming that one would expect to find on metal that has been cut by acetylene torches. The mass weighs, or did weigh, about 3,000 pounds. If it ever was part of an old bridge, then how many thousands of tons did the bridge weigh?

While the metal was being moved by some of those interested, it slipped, falling onto a concrete floor and cracking it. There was apparently not any evidence of such a mass ever having been towed to where it was found. What methods were used to put the metal down on the boulder where it was found without causing indentations on the boulder? Does Mr. Matthews have any personal opinions about the nature of the metal, and has he compared his own expert appraisal of the metal with those of the scrap-dealer?

Personally, taking all things into consideration, I cannot agree with his statements in your article.

Ronald Anstee,
Montreal, Que.

Without bias or opinion we quoted Mr. Matthews' views that the metal was a piece of debris from the Quebec bridge that collapsed in 1907. We do believe, however, more solid information is needed in this debatable case. Hopefully the lab report mentioned by Mr. Bray will provide it.

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