

Copy to The Australian Aborigine by H. Base low
(Adelaide 1925) Ward & S. A. Grant, Geologist 218
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March 23rd, 1925.

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Sir Baldwin Spencer.
National Museum.
Melbourne.

Dear Professor,

Having given a few spare moments to the perusal of the treatise on The Australian Aboriginal by "the glorified flower of human culture" (p.58), I would express my sympathy for those who are destined to take the work as authoritative. They will be many and they will be duped like those who took his writings on oil for gospel. I am especially pleased with the picture of the man being boned. That ought to discredit the rest of his pictures. And one wonders who was the white girl who poses mid nothings on in another plate. A typical Teutonic touch— that one. The use of the word "altjerra" p.279, was surely picked up from a mission product? Moreover the names of the very few persons quoted and the general lack of information as to the sources of his information may impress some, but is not likely to go down with anthropologists of scientific attainment. The generalizations that are backed by reported observations from widely distant parts of this continent are not impressive to one who is accustomed to look in most things for the geographical limits to customs as well as rocks. Yet the air of authority is there and it will bluff most people.

With these sour remarks I had better pass on to more pleasant topics. This month or early next month I shall be back in the middle of this State looking for water to quench the thirst of a million sheep. The number has been definitely fixed by ministerial authority and the press has duly accepted the slogan of "a million sheep". The only thing remaining is to get the drinks for the poor beasts. It is quite an easy thing to do from the head office in Adelaide.

In the merry month of May I am due for another water trip to the Territory in the company of the new Government Geologist

who is to be appointed very shortly for work in the Northern Territory. I am by no means clear as to our relationship on this trip, but according to the official correspondence my capacity would be that of consultant, and indeed I have no wish to jump the other man's claim. As he has not yet been appointed he has not been consulted in the matter. I am naturally rather interested in the appointment and am wondering if Loftus Hills is to be the new geologist. He is pretty sure to have a shot at the vacancy, and one wonders what will be the competition for it. They are not offering a salary that is commensurate with the importance of the work that he will have to do nor with the conditions under which he will have to work single-handed. Yet the move to appoint someone to carry on the work is an excellent one, even if he starts off short-handed. I have stuck to the necessity of the Commonwealth having its own man in all my correspondence with them over water, and am naturally pleased at the decision at which they have arrived.

The paper containing some scattered notes on the structure of the Centre is written, despite innumerable interruptions. I wish I could draw pictures to illustrate it properly. If I could only do decent block diagrams it would make me happy. And if they were drawn perhaps the Royal Society would say it was too broke to print them. I hope that they will let me have a few photographs to illustrate some of the points that are made in the manuscript.

Stott passed through while I was away looking for sheep-drink and I am sorry that I missed him.

The numerous family is feeling very strong indeed and sends its joint regards. Ruffie is being tamed at school this year, and is suffering the painful process rather more resignedly than I expected.

Yours faithfully,

L. Keith Ward.