

The University of Sydney

2 January 1927.

Dear Sir Baldwin,

Thank you for your letter of Dec 27th. I am greatly interested to hear the results of the examination of hair which is, of course, what one would have been inclined to expect.

As to the spelling of native words in your new book I most strongly recommend retaining the same spelling that you used before. No one will make any criticism of that and on the contrary some might criticise if you changed. The fact that I sometimes use a

spelling different from yours is not in any way a criticism of your procedure.

Some of us are trying to introduce, as far as possible, a universal phonetic spelling for native languages generally and I have therefore adopted as far as I can a system similar to that of Father Schmidt and that used by Merilof and his school for African languages. In these systems *u* is used for the vowel in 'pull' or, with a diacritical, for that in 'fool'.

The second vowel in Aranda seems to me to be the one heard in such an English word as 'but' and this I should write in a phonetic transcription as *ä*, making

44
the word aränta or arända. But in many of tribes diacritical marks have to be omitted, and are really only in their proper place in text and dictionaries or glossaries. As to the *t* or *d*, my own experience has been that it is exceedingly difficult to distinguish the voice from the voiceless consonants in Australian languages so that it does not really matter very much which one uses in any particular instance. Amongst the various spellings of the name of the Arante I found only two that need be considered and of them the form Aranda was nearest to my own system and so I fell into the habit of using that form. I think that on the whole I would prefer to go on doing this. But I would at the same time strongly recommend you to keep to your old spelling, which in all respects is yours.

and as being quite as accurate
on your system as any other.

I think exactly the same thing
applies to such words as churinga
and alchera. No one will or
can criticize the spellings which
have found their way from your
books into a vast number of others.

The spelling of Australian languages
has been chaotic in the extreme.
All that is required of any ethnologist
is that he should spell consistently
and explain to his readers the
phonetic value of the letters and signs
he uses. I hope that some day,
when dictionaries and texts in
native languages are concerned, it
may be possible to introduce a scientific
phonetic system and attain uniformity
and exactness. But till this has
been done there is no standard or
canon.

49

The University of Sydney.

I have heard from Sidney Ray and he does not seem inclined to conclude and take up the study of an Australian language, but expresses a willingness to consider a definite offer to come and carry further his work on the Papuan and Melanesian languages.

I hear that the Australian National Research Council has nominated you as its representative on an Advisory Committee on Anthropology in connection with the work here. It has been suggested that a meeting of this committee should be held during the second week of February. I hope that you will be free to attend at that time.

The University of Sydney

I need hardly tell you that I shall look forward eagerly to your next and I suppose final account of the Antarctic.

With kind regards and best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Arthur R. Peck

Natural History Council

... in the report ...
... on the Antarctic Committee ...
... in connection with the ...
... it has been suggested ...
... that a meeting of this committee ...
... should be held during the summer ...
... of February. I hope that ...
... will be for the sake of that ...