Office of the Northern Protector of Aboriginals,

To Home Secretary

Loomtown, 8th Feb. 1903

Brisbane

My dear Spencer,

Very many thanks, indeed, for all your trouble for the hints and reference which in almost every case I have followed; with regard to sections 67 and 68, in my notes on margin of attached slip.

In sect. 110, ham-string is correct: the blacks have an idea that when a person is sick, and too weak to get on his feet, the ham-strings have been cut (a punishment which is inflicted for various offences). It is only fair to state that I never saw one of these alleged bits of ham-string which is supposed to break luck to it bearer.

The other points over which you had doubts, I think I have now made perfectly clear by the addition of post-notes.

I am taking the revised proofs back to the Government Printer tomorrow and as he will next be making them up into paper, I will get 2 extra proofs.
Struck off (just as they will appear when published) by the end of the week, and will send you and Tyler each an advance copy, so to speak, together with the illustrations.

I have very good reason to ignore the gentleman whom you mention in your letter—(1) because he has always avoided meeting me straightforwardly; (2) he has tried to do some dirty work with me—but it didn’t come off, and (3) about 18 yrs ago, he acted the Common or garden blackguard as follows.

A lady, friend of mine, inspired with a little enthusiasm through the perusal of my grammar, took up the work and after a great deal of worry, time and labour got together a neat little paper on one of the N.S.W. dialects. The gentleman in question happened to hear of her work, expressed his great interest in it, and asked for the loan. He then proceeded to stuff this grammar as his own before one of the local Sweester! He is a true parasite—no “mutualism” or “communism” about him.

I can assure you I feel very proud of your congratulations: you know me well enough to realise that when I say this I mean it. It’s all kicks and very little happiness up here!—by the by, did you hear how I was attacked in Parliament last November, and how the Minister defended me, the debate reaching into 6 or 7 pages of Hansard. It was very funny. I tell you candidly that I tried to make this present bulletin a success; it is the most difficult which so far I have attempted but then it means real, which have been collected since 1894 when I first went to Bondi. I intend working in this district again this year—and hence hope to find something more about the snapper, & bring from these Bondi blacks. What disillusioning me so however is that all these blacks are dying off so speedily, and the younger generation knows nothing!

Please remember me kindly to Martin: I would much like to see the dear old chap again.
let me congratulate you on having such nice fellows like Frank Andrews and O'Brien: if you've got any more of that species, send them along.

Yes, I often think of the dear old times at Oxford, and how I wasted my opportunities. But I think I've now made up for all deficiencies and errors of early youth—at least, I've worked hard since, and certainly tried to make up for lost time. These thoughts came back to me somewhat forcibly a few months ago when I heard of the death from cancer of poor lady Ferguson—"Bee" Max Müller that was—my old "pal" of undergraduate days.

By the by: I'm going to ask you a favour old man. When you have time I would be awfully grateful if you could let me have a copy of the photo-group, with Moreley in the centre, that was taken at the Museum just before we went in for our finals; also please put underneath,
all the names, some of which I dare say I shall have forgotten. Like yourself, I have the signs of age coming on, but thank God my heart is young, and I can still enjoy life and see and recognise all its charms and beauties. Added to this, I love my work, so what more does a man want?

My dear wife is looking forward to welcoming my boy Vincent who arrived in Sydney from Scotland yesterday. He is now thirteen, and it is 9 years since I have seen him, so that you can imagine the joy when he arrives next Thursday.

I quite agree with you as to your views about teaching the Aborigines too much - views endorsed by the
northern missionaries themselves: indeed, glancing at my report, you will see that they are really reformatory and industrial schools - I quite agree with you as to the pampering, pampering, and over"education" to which the blacks have been subjected in other states. At any rate, I shall soon have another annual report to send you - so you can then see for yourself what progress I have been making.

I sincerely trust that you and yours are all keeping well, and have got through the last heat wave all right, and with kinder remembrances from us both to you all.

Believe me,

Always yours,

Walt, Scott

I will post the advance proofs directly, I set them both to yourself and Tyler - the latter wrote me on the same subject a few weeks ago - and I am very grateful for the reference and note you supplied me with.

I see in your letter you speak of "Worgaid" - I presume these are the Waagai of your "Central Tribe," - which I call the Workaia.