Cooktown
8th October 98.

My dear Spencer,

I have been putting off writing to you week after week, but until now have been almost run off my head and legs with work, setting everything in readiness for the Commissioners whom we are daily expecting— as soon as he comes, I expect we shall be making a trip right through, overland, to Cape York.

Yes, by Jove, I often smile at the way we used to “chuck” Hickson: Poulton, I could never stand, and I think you shared the same sentiment towards the gentleman. I am
delighted at Brisbane getting Oxford — in addition to his scientific attainments, he was a thorough gentleman. No "snob" about him. When next you write to C.C.B. please remember me very kindly to him, and tell him that his old pupil has not done so badly after all!

Like yourself, Australian life has a great charm for me — I love the freedom of existence, the hospitality of the people in general, the climate, and I am extremely fond of my work. Of course this year, in my position as Protector, most of my time has been occupied in office and clerical work, drawing up regulations,
(So far as Australia was concerned)
attack in my life, & though I tried them in every way, they could not get beyond the score - both hands & both feet. But as I go along, I find nothing but surprises everywhere: - I guess you have found the same.

I heartily congratulate you upon McMillan's accepting your work, and I appreciate very much your kindness in asking them to send me a copy when published: I need hardly assure you that it will be highly valued by me.

Certainly in the N.W. Central, and in the Cook (N.E. Coast) District, I know of no natives calling themselves Kangaroos.
conquiring into existing abuses, aiming at popularising and introducing the new Act generally, and consulting with the different Police Officials who will in the future look after its proper execution.

Next year, on the other hand, I shall be travelling about for the most part of the time, and camping out with the blacks, when I hope to have even better opportunities than at present for carrying on my scientific duties. Even this year however has shown comparatively good results: for instance, during my last visit among the Cairns District Aboriginals I found the natives counting up to 20, in multiple of fives; I never was so taken
Kokoymidir speaking natives (but more inland) are the “Koko-yellaunj” which in their language also means “speak — thus (like this).” Another neighbouring tribe speaks “Koko-warra” which in the Cooktown dialect means “speak foreign (ie. wild).”

In the Kokoymidir speaking tribe we have two exogamous divisions only, while in the neighbouring Koko-yellaunj we find the (good old) four groups of Wongko, Bumbiri, Koorkilla, Koorpooroo. Only in certain of the dances at the initiation stage in this district is there some (what perhaps you would regard totemic) allusion to animals,
emu etc men: in the former locality I could obtain no meanings of the names they called themselves collectively. Up here in the Cook district the natives call themselves after the places where they are born e.g. Mount Cook = Kī-âr, and any one born in that camp is Kī-âr-ā-rā, the suffix being sometimes pronounced -wā-rā. Now the Mount Cook boys are friendly, intermarry etc with all the coastal blacks (named on similar lines) from the Ahau River to (close up to) Cape Haltey. The term "Koko-yimidoi" comprise all these blacks collectively, this term literally signifying "speak - thus (similar, the same) in close proximity to their
terms you propose adopting in the future re Social Relationship, e.g. Class, Sub-Class, Status, term, Relationship term, Totem name, Term of Address, etc. They are simply definitive, and do not arrogate too much. Even these however will hardly comprise, or define (except perhaps under Status term?) what I find in this Cook District —

e.g. among the males —
A. name at puberty (early)
B. name at puberty (late) when he undergoes initiation (of which there is but one ceremony only)
C. name, when his children begin to toddle, and walk about
D. name, when his children are adult and getting on in life
E. name (the last of all) when
in that we find a wild cat, Kangaroo, etc. dance. On the other hand you must remember that for many generations past there must have been Malay and Papuan influences at work, these foreigners working their way down Cape York, the Gulf etc. and so destroying any totemic systems that may have been present among those Aboriginal whom they conquered and dispersed. Personally I am finding more and more of this foreign element among these northern Aboriginal, e.g. the outrigger canoes, the bark blankets, the taboo, the high development of "cal' cradle." etc.

I am very pleased with the
his flash-scans begin to disappear.

Here is a nice complication!

Of course re all my scientific reports to the Government, I take a press copy of everything, including photos and drawings. I hope thus to have a lot of MSS etc to show you when I come down to the 1900 meeting in Melbourne. Of course before that time comes, I shall get you privately through your Committee to ask the Queensland Government to let me represent them officially. I could then be certain if being able to put in an appearance down
Down South. I think you will be pleased with all the MSS I shall then be able to show you.

Now that the proper season is on, I am working hard at all the local economic plants — not only those used for food (and how prepared etc.), but those used for fibre, for poisoning water, for different implements, for gum-cement, etc. The Government Botanic is doing the thankless task of identification.

Well good by, old chap, and with best remembrances,

Always sincerely yours,

Walter E. Roth