

Oempelli  
Nov 18 1916

Sir Baldwin Spencer  
Melbourne

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Dear Sir Baldwin.

I am sending you a list of the Murrain Totems; I sent the Murrains some months ago, but could not find the book that I had the names written in, until Mr Cahill came home. There are some totems that the man, (O'Brien) left in charge of Oempelli, got while I was away, but they are duplicated & you can compare them and name them. I hope that the package reached you safely - I have a few bark paintings here now, and if they are any use to you, let me know and I will send them along to you, first chance. I am continually going & have hardly time to get out and see to the cattle, I am fixing up a freezing plant, building etc, for some, so cannot leave the station for any length of time. If I have to go away for a few hours, the work is stopped during my absence. If you paid us another visit, you would hardly know the place. There was a rather strong blow, some time back. It took the roof off our house, blew down our houses, and broke down over a hundred of

of our banana trees. A good number were in fruit, and we could only save about a doz - bunches of bananas - Pawpaw trees suffered very much, but we still have a few left. We had a nice crop of lemons this year, and any amount of Kumquats. Our mango trees are starting to bear fruit, & we have had some dozens up to date. Our vegetable garden was not so good as usual, very few seeds would germinate, and what few come up, were too late in the season to become of much use. Luckily I had a good patch of sweet potatoes and still have two months supply for the natives. Menu for natives, Breakfast, a large plate of rice and as much milk as they want, some pawpaws and a thermos tin full of tea. Lunch - Ruffalo beef or pork, stew with cabbage beans sweet potatoes, bread, (golden syrup sometimes) and butter, & tea. Supper, very often wild goose or duck, stew with vegetables bread and tea. So you see, they are not starving. I show the boys, the Times History of the war that you so kindly send & Captain and others would like to go and shoot some Germans. When I tell them that you send the paper, they clap their hands on their thighs & say Professor mook-wah & whistle, you know how they do, much better than I can explain on paper. I have been promising myself a week off and get some more folk lore from them, but the promised vacation is a long time coming. Rev J. Watson has now a mission station on Gouldburn Island and came here about three weeks ago, and went in



with my boys, to Burundie. From what he says, he thinks that he will be very successful with his mission. Teaching the girls to read and write & do house work and keep them clean and make them love home life. When the girls are taken by their husbands and made to hunt food for a dirty old native and probably get a hiding if she does not get enough food. I believe in doing all that I can for the natives, but their future frightens me. If the mission people could only make the natives ambitious so that he could be made to live in a house & do any thing for a living, except treapanying or hunting or be a hand on a plantation, then it would be a kindness to teach their women civilized habits, learn them to read and write cook & be clean, but to instil the love of housekeeping into any woman and then turn them over to a nomadic native & for the women to go back to their usual way of life, then I say that it is an injustice to any woman and anything but a kindness - Mr Watson is talking of a trip right through this part of the Territory, along the coast, towards the Roper River and has asked me to try and join him on the trip. There is not the slightest hope of my going with him on this trip. Mr Watson told me that he had your book with him and finds it of great value to him in his work with the natives. He is very earnest in his work & has a nice place for his station and all the natives are used to working treapany De. from a financial point of view, the place should be

success, but, to get the natives to believe in any other religion than their own, well you + I know better than that. I heard Mr David Lindsay holding forth in the Hotel Victoria, about reincarnation I said that it was all rot - There was a fair audience when I joined in. I sat and listened for a time, your book was referred to by Mr Lindsay, It only took me about five minutes to show Mr L - that he knew as little about the native beliefs as most other bookmen. It is wonderful how much the average Combo; thinks he knows about the natives. Almost of his folk lore; he gets from the Lubra that he keeps and she makes up, anything that she does not know - and then the Combo, poses as an authority. If I could only spare the time there is a good lot of other beliefs among my natives that I could get for you. I am again going to try and get a few months furlough & if I can, I hope to see you again & have a good chat - Most of the old men that you knew - are now dead - and it will not be many years before nearly all Rakade traditions will be things of the past. I am sending you a photo of the Kar-go, gaimby, (dog stone) and a bit of the tradition attached to it. Mr Cahill and I join me in wishing you + yours a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

yours truly  
Paddy Cahill