

Romula poisoning
case

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Carpelli

Sir Baldwin Spencer
Melbourne

Oct-10 1917

Dear Sir Baldwin

Here are the facts of the attempted poisoning case in which Romula appeared as chief actor. Jan 22. I had a lot of cattle in the yard, to put through the dip. At breakfast I was not very well, so only had a cup of coffee. O'Brien had some eggs and bread and butter on his plate and had started his meal. Mrs Cahill sat down after pouring out the coffee. Lorn was giving the natives some milk to put on their rice for breakfast. Mrs Cahill said something wrong with this bread and butter; it is very bitter. I tasted the bread and then the butter. O'Brien said, I swallowed some hard bitter substance. I examined the butter in the basin and found some foreign matter in it, told Lorn to give it to the dog which was done. We went to the yard and started dipping the cattle. I told Lorn to bring up a jug of water from the house. When Lorn

with the water, he told me that the dog was dead. O'Brien then said that he felt very bad and could hardly walk to the house. First aid was rendered to O'Brien and Mrs Cahill also took an emetic. Poor old Marealmart and Lopsy; Romulas wife had eaten some eggs & bread and butter and was poisoned. Mrs Cahill and Tom rendered them first aid for poison. As soon as the emetics were working, I rushed around and arrested Mulwoyo and Tipper. When I put the hand cuffs on Mulwoyo; he said I no been put strychnine in butter boss, Romula been put him in poison, I at once got a chain and padlock and arrested Romula. When arresting Romula he came towards me; and calling on the other boys said come on and help me. Mitchurlect said I cannot help you; you been put poison alonga butter. As soon as Romula called on the other boys, I dont doubled up the chain and struck him on the head very hard; knocking him down I at once fastened the chain on his neck and tied him up. You can imagine my feelings

and the frame of mind that I was in.
Mr Cahill vomiting O'Brien almost dead
the two lubras rolling on the ground vomiting
and likely to die at any moment. I kept as
cool as I could during the whole time, and
thank God, I did so. When I got things
fixed up; Romula said you took out boss
nother one boy put poison in the waterbag.
I at once sent Tom and two boys up to the
camp to bring all the dilly bags - I took
charge of several portions of native poisons -
I got all the boys together and asked them
what was wrong. Their reply was that I would not
let them beat their women, would not let them
fight among themselves with spears and fighting
sticks. I had made an order that no
fighting was allowed on the Station, and
no man was to beat his lubra. Any rows
at the camp were to be referred to me and
I would fix up matters. This did not meet
with the approval of two or three of the best
fighters - When the men got together they talked
over this subject. (Tipper) Murrakara said more
better poison than one Paddy Cahill - Him

- him no more all the same before. No more let us fight, no more let us kill our lubras more better put poison in water bag. Some time afterwards, Nipper told Munnierloko to get some poison (native) and stood over Munnierloko with spears until he put the poison in the water bag.

Munnierloko - says, I been put poison in the water bag, because Nipper made me do it, and I was sorry for my lubra - when you been say my lubra killed a goat - I replied that it was true that you lubra with others killed some goats

(Nipper) Munakara had been buffalo shooting for J. A. Smith for years and always had his own way. Two years ago Nipper speared a boy at Smith's camp and Smith took the boy to the Darwin Hospital and paid all costs - The boy recovered. Nipper shot a lot of buffalo's for Mr Smith and it was to Mr Smith's profit to look after Nipper, consequently Nipper done as he liked among the other natives, armed with a rifle

There was no disputing his authority. Each year that I have been here Tipper wanted to work for me, but I would not take him away from Smith - Last year I put Tipper on wages here, and during my absence O'Brien had trouble with Tipper - On my return from Lorrain I spoke to Tipper and pointed out to him that he would be treated the same as the other station hands. A few days afterwards Charley came to me with his ear nearly cut off, just hanging by a piece of skin - I at once sewed Charley's ear on again, and sent for Tipper. I asked why he done this, and he said all about play spear fight with blunt spears - A few days after this the first attempt was made to poison us - I blame this man for all the trouble.

The two men (Tipper) Muna Para, and (Billy) Munnierlorko were taken before Dr Jones J.P. by the police here, and on their own confession were given six months, & if they failed to find sureties to keep the peace.

Romula.

Romulo started to fall away from grace after his trip in the the Administrator. Mrs Gehrth, Allen Hunt and Mrs Carey's party. When the party reached the motor car the four boys were left with the pack horses and very little rations. I coming along a few days later nursed the boys, I took a shot cat + the boy following the usual road nursed me + Mrs Cobhill. When the boys got as far as the banyan, the other natives told them that I had passed. Quiep and Andy at once followed me up, telling Romula and Jirragard to take the other horses to Ompelli. Andy said that Romula was very wild and swearing very much against the whites said that he Romula would not go back to Ompelli but would stay at the Banyan. I went to Darwin, saw Mrs C and Ruby off to Sydney. I was instructed to take cattle from Batchelor to Ompelli, 200 miles. The cattle were poor and I had to go slow, being over a month on the road, when I got to Ompelli with the cattle,

Romula

Romula had got back one day before me. When Romula arrived I asked him his reason for not bringing back the pack horses, and why he stayed at the Banyan. He said that he was a fool, and did not know why he did not come back with the horses. I told him that he could take his lubra and go away for a spell. Romula asked me for medicine and told me that he was bad. I examined him and found that he was suffering from a bad dose of venereal - a chancre. I treated him for both complaints. A few weeks later, Jopy Romula's wife came to do her work and was all swollen about the neck. She would not tell me what did it. I rubbed some liniment on and in the afternoon one of the other lubras told me that Romula had hit her with a woman, during the night, and also that he took her away to the jungle and threw spears at her, saying that she was going with Quilp. I took Romula away from the other boys so they should not hear what I said. I gave him a good talking to and told him that I would send him to get

Romula

if he ever did such a thing again. I told him to sit down quiet until he was cured of the venereal, and then he could take his lubra and go for a spell. That night at the camp he tore up his shirt in rage; and taking his lubra ran away. Next day I was carting some goods from the landing, I saw Lopsy in the distance but did not trouble them. Captain Mugg was surveying the river, so I wrote him telling him not to take any natives to Darwin without my permission. I also told him Romula was going down his way to Worrohat. About ten days later Romula came back to the station very sick. Lopsy could hardly walk, she had bubo very big and a heavy cold & feverish. I doctored them both & painting Lopsy with Iodine cured her. Romula said he would leave Lopsy at the station and he would have a spell in the bush. I gave him medicine to take with him. Romula came back in a few days, getting food at the station. I had to send over to Goulburn Island Mission Station with something for the Rev J Watson

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Romula

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Romula hearing this asked me to let him go with Tipper, as he would like to see the new station. I gave them food and more Santalwood oil for Romula - horses + saddles and they got back to Campelli on Christmas eve. Had a great feast on Christmas day, Cakes and plum puddings - I had killed a bullock + they all had as much as they could eat. Blankets, mosquito nets and clothe were given out to all hands - On Boxing day sports were held - everyone seemed to be happy, and a few days later the poisoning case in the water bay took place & a few days later the butter was poisoned - I blame Tipper for the whole lot of the trouble. - Tipper is at the present time doing six months for killing a station cow.

You have now sir
The whole of the facts. No reason was given by any unjust treatment for the poisoning - No harshness of any kind - all sickness, wounds or anything else was attended to as well as we could possibly come
Yours faithfully
Paddy Cahill