

Batchelor Farm
May 29 1921

Sir Baldwin Spencer
Melbourne

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Dear Sir Baldwin

your welcome letter reached me a few days ago + we were very glad to hear from you, + that you + yours were well.

I came in + brought Mr Cahill with me, overland to Pine Creek. After our heavy wet season our trip was rather rough on Mr C. I took good care to keep our nations dry when crossing any deep water. I sent a home mad boat up the E.A. River + got over that safely. One little bog gave us a deal of trouble, 13, head of our horses getting bogged at once. But as usual, we got through all right. I had instructions to come in, and take charge of 800 head of Mataranka cattle, that would be waiting for me at Pine Creek. I had also to arrange to get the cattle from Batchelor Farm (400 head) to meet me somewhere on the Oupelli road. When I reached Pine Creek, I wired to the G.P. for instructions. After a wait of three days, I got a reply telling me to send boys + horses to Batchelor, as cattle would be lifted from Batchelor first, and come to Darwin. This I done + now I am waiting at Batchelor Farm for the cattle to be mustered

+ then off to Oupelli again. Mr L, goes with me, sooner than take a holiday south. I saw Mr Beckett, a few days ago at Darwin. He had come in from Vandaleon Island at the mouth of the McArthur River. Last September he bought the Mataranka sheep 900 head + had them taken via Borroloola to the mouth of the McA river, + then take them to the island by launch just imagine a man fool enough to try + keep sheep on an island, where every water hole of any size, has heaps of alligators. All the creeks are tidal & you know what that means.

Mr B bought the sheep very ^{cheap}, but droving expenses + losses will run up a large amount of expenses. Last report that came in, was. Half sheep dead + the rest had not reached their destination. I pity the shareholders in this venture.

Minister Pointon of Home + Territories is at present at Mataranka Gov Station, and is expected here on Tuesday 31st of May. The J.W.W. crowd at Darwin have again gone mad + at a meeting decided not to wait on the Minister. Numerous deputations have decided to place their grievances before him. I was asked to make one of them, but replied, I have a head of the department to take my complaints to, when I have any, so do not join in any of their foolishness. I only saw the New Administrator for a few minutes on departmental business, + then he was suffering from ~~some~~ ^{chronic} neuralgia + very busy. He says that he will come to Oupella at first opportunity. S Smith, our acting Administrator was a good friend to all the crowd that have been causing all the

trouble. He gave Wolmer Abs Reserve to the very men who waited on Dr Gilruth & later in the day assaulted him - I was very disappointed in S.S. & am glad that he has gone from the N.T. While he was at Ompelli, I brought some sick natives, mostly V. D. compass & asked for permission to send them to Darwin for medical treatment, but he refused, saying. They would get no attention & would be better with me. One case Congra (Ben Bolt) you knew him. Congra was at Cape Don, took his wife and three young children, to see the light house. Congra got very sick & started back to Ompelli (150 miles) When 60 miles from Ompelli, he sent his wife & another woman to me for medicine. When they got back to Congra, he struggled on & reached the station in a very bad state I fed him up on plenty of good soups, ducks & vegetables. When the boat arrived with our supplies only six months late, The Acting Adm, was on board. I asked him to let Congra to go to Darwin, as his case was beyond me. Poor old B.B. was with me, when S.S. refused, & the tears came down the poor old chap's face when he found that he could not get to the Dr & said to me. No matter Boss, you took out for my little girls, & me die here with you. Poor old chap had great lumps all over him; very hard & no signs of softness or coming to a head. He always had pain in his head. I done every thing that I possibly could, giving him sleeping draughts, so that he could have a rest. About the last words he said, look out alonga (ngvina healala) my babies. When he died, his remains were placed in paperbark.

+ put up a tree. Later on his remains were being removed to his own country, (about 25 miles down the river) Mithalak brought the skull to me. On the right side of the skull, there was a hole, about an inch across. The bone was eaten from the inside just as a white ant eats a piece of wood. I have promised to send the skull to Dr Jones of Darwin, + he said he would let me know the cause of the hole. We have very little attention at Oupelli this last year. One boat in Jan 3, + the next Nov 30. A great number of the old natives have died + very few are left. Poor old Mirealmak has been on the verge for a long time + may be dead before I return. Last year she was very bad + the other natives were around her crying, poor old soul was almost gone, I sat by her side + gave her a little whiskey + hot milk, with about 30 drops of tincture of opium in it. After a few minutes she was asleep. The natives thought she was dead, + I made them keep quiet for an hour or so she woke up, + I gave her a basin of soup + in a few weeks she was on her feet, but very feeble. Poor old soul, when we were getting ready for the trip, she came to Mrs C. and asked to be allowed to iron one dress please Mrs she said, + the poor old woman did iron one & she said, might me dead when you come back.

The Abo, department is doing very little for the natives, or were doing very little for this last year or so.

At Oupelli last year, I had about 120 head of fat bullocks + sold 100 head @ \$10.75 per head, to be delivered in November. S.S. would not let me deliver them and now we cannot get \$5.75 per head; + doubtful

if we can find a market.

My son Tom, is in Adelaide, I bought him a share in a motor business, so he has to launch out on his own account now. The N.T. at the present time; is no place for young men + I think that he is lucky to be out of it. The inland part of the N.T. is in a bad state. Pine creek, there are several men and one or two families living on Gov. Charity. At the hotel, there was one boarder, and very little bar trade was done. The wages alone for running this hotel would run into £1200 a year. There is hardly any mining going on there. Marrantooy, is just struggling along, + a big loss on the battery every year, has to be paid by the Gov. You remember when we crossed the Mary river, on our trip in from Kapalga to Brocks Creek. Well, there is a find of gold, in the mountains to the N N W of where we crossed the river. This find can only be a very small one, for the country all round there; has been fairly well prospected. The old battery site at Mount Ringwood is only about 18 miles from the new find. The train runs from Darwin to the Katherine or I should say Emungalan once a fortnight, going to Pine creek on Wednesday, to Emungalan + back on Thursday, + then to Darwin on Friday. You remember we used to have two trains per week when you were

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List

here. Ompelli is the same old place. We had a lovely grove of orange, Lemon, Kumquarts + mandarin oranges, but had to cut them down, without inspection. This was a great blow to us - as they were all in bearing + you know the trouble it takes to get these kind of things growing - Mango trees, bear very well + one year we had them fruit in May. The general time for fruiting is at the end of October bustard apples, Pawpaws give us a pleasant change. Our crop of Pigmy. Geese never fail. Last year we had thousands of Pelicans on the waterhole + they fairly cleaned out all our fish. I had hundreds shot for food for our natives but could not frighten them away. You say in your letter that you would be pleased to visit Ompelli again, but you not be half as pleased, as we would be, to have ~~you~~ them again. I told the natives that you might come once more to Ompelli + their delight knew no bounds - I always tell them what you are doing in Melbourne, when I hear from you + they are pleased to hear news of you. Joe Cooper is living about Treapong Bay, getting treapong. His son Reuben was married last year, to a Malay girl - a native of Darwin + lives at Darwin. This is about all the news of this part, so I must conclude by wishing you the best of good health + happiness, to you and yours. Yours faithfully
Paddy Cahill