

Frazer.

(5)

Melbourne

Dec. 6. 97

Dear Mr Frazer

I send herewith a

copy of a letter sent by today's mail
to Mr George Macmillan in which as you
will see I have asked him to send the
typewritten copy of our work on to you if he
does not care to publish it. The

great difficulty will probably lie in
regard to the illustrations. Certain
parts of it are uninteresting but we do not
like to omit more than has been

omitted as it is the detailed account
which I think adds to the value. As I
said before if you would be so good as
to decide on our behalf whether to
accept or not any proposal that is made
we will cordially & entirely accept your
decision.

There are two other subjects on which I

wanted also to write to you. The first is the publication of a work by W.E. Roth called "Notes on the North-west-Central Australian Aborigines" part of the Queensland Government & just issued. I thought that perhaps this might contain something of interest to you & might escape your notice.

Roth, who is an old Oxford man of my own standing, has worked apparently in complete ignorance of anything which has been done by anyone else. He has a long vocabulary & important chapters on Organization & gesture language. He has

invented names of his own for the various 'Classes' & relationship terms & has given these in greater detail than has yet been done & must have worked very hard & conscientiously. No filler & myself have gone into the same detail & we know what the work means. Curiously he makes no reference to Totems as such though they clearly exist. The rest of his work dealing with Ceremonies shows that he has not been

fully admitted to all their 'sacred' matters though he evidently thinks that he has.

The second matter is concerned with a further clearing up of the significance of certain Ceremonies connected with the Totems in the Aranda. From the account of the

Intichiuma & that is the ceremony designed to increase the number of the Totemic animals - in the Kangaroo Totem of one special Locality I think that we get the clue to the general meaning of these Ceremonies. At a place called

Undiana the great local centre of the Kangaroo Totem is a cave with a large rocky ledge on which at Intichiuma the men of the Totem bleed themselves. This ledge of rock is the granja stone of a big Kangaroo (an animal not a man) which in the Alcheringa was killed by Kangaroo-men & the rock arose to mark the place where the body was deposited.

The rock was inhabited by the spirit of the Kangaroo animal & to this spirit tradition says that large numbers of Kangaroo animals

came & went into the earth their spirit
parts remaining in the rock. The object of
the Intichiuma Ceremony is to drive these
spirit kangaroo animals out of the rock
whence they are supposed to scatter in all
directions & after that the kangaroos increase
in number. In other words the 'spirits'
of the animals go out & enter kangaroos.

Close by the rock is the water hole which
is inhabited by the spirits of kangaroo
men who went down into it just as the
animals did into the rock.

I am busy making a type written copy
for the press & by the time that this reaches
you it will be on its way home & once
more I trust that you will excuse the
liberty which I have taken in asking you
to be good enough to act on our behalf.

I am sorry to say that Mr Fison seems
to be very far from well. Yesterday he told
me that he was 'just walking about until
the undertaker's charges came down' & I
am afraid that he is very ill at all events he
is very different from what he used to be & we
are anxious about him.

Yours very sincerely

W. Baldwin Spencer.