

**Echo submission – February 7th 2011 for Kimberley Echo, Thursday February 10th 2010.**

The Richter Report, a result of the 1944 Ord surveys, classified soils and topography of the Ivanhoe Plains, reporting 80,000 acres of irrigable land. In 1945 the WA Government requested that a Kimberley Research Station (KRS) be set up, as a joint effort of the CSIR and the WA Department of Agriculture, as earlier suggested by FJS Wise.

As there was no blacksoil at Carlton Reach, equipment was relocated to the KRS site. In 1951 The KRS Supervisory Committee (KRSSC) indicated that sugar and rice were two cash crops that could justify dam construction. Two years work on the Beef Roads Scheme saw a formed road from Wyndham to Carlton Ridge (Sleeping Buddha) by the end of 1952.

During the 1952/53 wet season the KRS suspended cotton growing in the hope of reducing pests. Ivanhoe Crossing was upgraded, with 125 Culverts, each made from 6x44 Gallon drums, purchased in Wyndham at 30/- each, welded end to end. Completed over two dry seasons by December 1953, costing £30,000, as part of the 1st element of the "Beef Roads Scheme." Anecdotal evidence suggests that these 750 drums were remains from the Wyndham airport fuel depot, bombed by the Japanese about ten years earlier on March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1942.

In 1955 rice cultivation at KRS had expanded to twenty acres of the "Indica" type, supplying eight tons of seed to commercial ventures in the North, however a small area of cotton was badly affected by insects. In 1957 the KRSSC were confident that sugar cane was well adapted to the Ord and suggested social and economic, rather than more agronomic investigations be made.

In April 1959 KRSSC recommended the establishment of a Pilot Farm and by August that year the Commonwealth government made a grant of £5m to WA, most for the Ord. By October 1959, the new town of "Kununurra" had been planned, along with two future towns, "Eastern Town" and "Western Town" and the KRSSC had dropped sugar favouring safflower in its place. The first building was erected on the corner of Messmate and Konkerberry behind the PWD and by 1961 ten elevated houses and two others were complete or neared completion.



*"First building at town - Government Office November 1959" Cyril Ion Collection <http://www.kununurra.org.au/> KHS Digital Archive Number KHS 2010-2-045-ar-PD*