

Echo submission – January 10th 2011 for Kimberley Echo, Thursday January 13th 2011.

Since the first European explorations, many have discussed the possibilities of tropical agriculture in the Kimberley, including Alexander Forrest in 1879, when he re-named what was formerly known as "De Witt Land" then "Tasman Land" to the Kimberley Region, as well as naming the Ord River. Towards the end of his journal, Forrest writes on October 15th 1879,

'it will, I believe, be found that an extent of country equal to about 25 million acres has been opened up for pastoral and agricultural experiments.'

In 1909 the WA Government sent Mr. J. M. A. Despeissis to investigate the potential for tropical agriculture in the state's north, who reported that with water conservation and irrigation, the Kimberley was suitable for tropical agriculture. In the following years much was discussed but little done.

In September 1921 several East Kimberley pastoralists banded together and formally requested that the WA government should *'consider the construction of a dam at the bend of the Ord to prevent salt water contaminating the fresh water already there.'*

In August 1923, Mr. F. J. S. Wise, an officer of the Queensland Department of Agriculture, was appointed as Tropical Advisor. Cotton experiments were happening in West and East Kimberley, with Hay & Overheu having success on Nulla Nulla.

The North West Department showed commitment to cotton and in 1925, the North West Department purchased the state's first cotton gin at a cost of £215/5/-.

After the abolishment of the North West Department, there was discussion but little action until the late 1930's.



Tropical Agriculture at "Palm Springs, a few miles from Hall's Creek about 1925" - KHS Flinders Collection

Other KHS Flinders References in KHS Archives.

FLINDERS C.E. DATA FROM "A BRIEF HISTORY OF WYNDHAM.	KHS-2001-38-OG3-nn
FLINDERS FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION 1920-1930	KHS-2002-8-P6
ABORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS FROM FLINDERS COLLECTION	KHS-2002-8-y-ac-I1