

KHS “Looking Back” Column for *The Kimberley Echo*, Thursday June 2nd 2011

As the Diversion Dam work-force increased towards the end of May 1961 a joint statement by the Building Trades Association of Unions and the North Australian Workers Union, alleged destitution on the Ord, stating, “*about 60 unemployed men are living off the land at Ivanhoe Crossing on the Ord River near Wyndham.*” This came after a visit by BTAoU secretary, Mr. Clohessy to the Diversion Dam site. Acting Premier Court said he'd seen no sign of this when he was at the site a few days ago and as his visit was publicised, thought it curious, that “*none of the alleged unemployed had got in contact with him.*”

Minister Court was “acting Premier” as Premier Brand was on a 4 week tour of the North and on May 29th 1961, he officially opened the “Government Officer's' Club,” (Ord River Club) on the premises of the Government Hostel in the new town of Kununurra. “Mr. Brand was introduced by Mr. Roy Hamilton, president of the club, and was supported by Mr. Munro, Hydraulic Engineer, and Mr. Manton (secretary).” Mr. Brand congratulated the sponsors on their organisation, saying “*this evening was an event of **historical importance** to Kununurra and marked part of a move forward to settle the North and carry out development so vitally needed.*”

On May 30th, 1961 the first two of 20 flood-gates for the Diversion Dam, weighing 267 tons, were transported by rail from Bassendean, then loaded on board the Dulverton for Wyndham.



Excavating for the Diversion Dam east bank abutment (“monolith 47”) - where the roadway approach will be – Circa May 1961. – Unknown photographer

KHS Archives prior to Accessioning – 1997 - KHS Archive Number KHS-1998-5-bg-P2-D

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