

**KHS “Looking Back” Column for *The Kimberley Echo*, Thursday May 19<sup>th</sup> 2011**

A new Commonwealth – State authority was being suggested in May 1961 to develop Western Australia's North-West, the Northern Territory and the north of Queensland. In another article many pastoralists felt they had been neglected in plans for northern development and were fearful that their best land would be taken away when the irrigation areas were established. Many of their objections were overcome by the State Governments' submissions for an £8,000,000 plan to improve the existing Kimberley road system. It was stated that WA could add £20,000,000 a year to its income if plans for the development of irrigation in the North were realised. “The damming of the three big rivers—the Ord, the Fitzroy and the Margaret—would provide the State with a minimum of 300,000 acres of irrigation land.” The Camballin rice project had been established on the banks of the Fitzroy River at Liveringa station and a river barrage was under construction by the PWD that would enable the irrigation of 2,000 acres of rice a year from 1962. Northern Developments Pty. Ltd., the company which pioneered the Camballin project, was also operating the Ord River Pilot Farm of 2,000 acres on the Ord River. The company was “undertaking commercial production to prove the economics of the Ord River project and is now harvesting 200 acres of rice from a summer planting. It plans to grow 300 acres of rice and safflower in the coming dry season.” Tenders were being called for the “Kununurra (Ord River Township) Police Station and Quarters-Erection.”



*Bernard Penglase operating Rice Harvester - 1st Pilot Farm rice harvest May 1961.*

*Cyril Ion 35mm Slide (Allister Family) Collection - KHS-2010-2-092-cm-PD*