

## KYBYBOLITE OBJECT LESSON IN IMPROVING LAND.

*Extract from the Naracoorte Herald, Friday 8 January 1937, at the time of Mr Kiddle's death*

The country comprising the Kybybolite pastoral estate, was sold by Mr Richard Kiddle to the South Australian Government in 1905 and was cut up the same year into blocks for closer settlement, and has now gained fame as an object lesson in what can be done with comparatively poor land in improving it for agricultural and pastoral purposes.

As a sheep station it did not carry a sheep to the acre, and the people of the district were despondent at the purchase of such land for closer settlement. The struggle the early settlers had on it showed that the opinions of the people about it were not far out. The Government decided to respond to the suggestion made by some to set apart a portion of the estate surrounding the home station as an experimental farm. Generally, the early settlers, in taking up the land for pastoral purposes made their homes in the midst of the best of their land and the block surrounding the Kybybolite homestead was in the centre of the best of the land comprising the estate.

The Experimental Farm started under the management of Mr. Simon H. Schinckel, a well-known agriculturalist in the district, but when he went to turn up the country for cropping he found it difficult to work. It was wet and boggy with an ironstone subsoil and the horses attached to the ploughs could scarcely get through it. The first settlers had similar experiences, and in the language of the "bold colonial boy," the land was voted a "blue duck." For the first year or so the settlers became sick and tired of their blocks and a number were ready to sell out at any price which would pay their debts.

The Experimental Farm kept going, and the district people generally stated it was wasting money to carry it on. New managers for the farm came along and kept on experimenting with new methods. Superphosphates had not come into vogue then. Mr. Colebatch was one of the new managers, and he went in for a scheme of drainage which would keep the land on the farm dry in the autumn to facilitate the working of the land to get the crops in. He had faith in the country being improved by working it to make it arable, and his faith was embraced by a number of the enterprising settlers.

The Government had purchased the Hynam and Binnun Estates for closer settlement, much of them comprising similar land to that on Kybybolite. Mr. Colebatch encouraged the settlers on the respective estates to keep on believing. In time, new men bought out a number of the old settlers and they adopted the faith that something could be made of the land if they could only discover the right methods. Many of them managed, by enterprise and dogged

determination, to discover the best methods of dealing with the land, and met with wonderful success in making Kybybolite and the neighbouring estates famous for fertility.

It was a great discovery for the settlers and the district. Mr. Kiddle's name will be linked with this fertile spot in the South East in having sold his estate to the Government for closer settlement and thus enabling a prosperous agricultural settlement to be founded, which has added to the wealth of the district and the State. We may add that Mr. Kiddle was an experienced pastoralist and a most careful manager, and turned out good fine merino wool, but the productive power of his land in its original state was so poor that the weight of the fleece was small. The Kybybolite land is now carrying four and five sheep to the acre producing a heavy fleece of first-class merino wool.