

ILLAWARRA-ROBERTSON RAILWAY.

MR. CARL WEBER EXPLORING.

As stated in a recent issue of the "Mercury," Mr. STUART, of the Railway Department, who made a three days' flying scan of the country along the Illawarra Range, between Mt. Kembla, Macquarie River, and Robertson some months ago, reported against the idea of a railway being constructed over the mountain between the districts east and west of the said range. The Members for Illawarra and Kiama are combating that report, urging that a full and complete survey of the intervening mountain should be made; and that the Public Works Committee now taking evidence regarding a Bowral-Robertson section of the proposed railway, should visit Illawarra and take evidence there concerning the Illawarra-Robertson end of the intended line. The first mentioned member has already given evidence on the subject before the said Committee, and the second, who represents Robertson, has induced the Minister for Works to depute Mr. Carl WEBER, of Wollongong, to make as much exploration of the mountain range forthwith, as can be done in time for his report to be submitted to the Committee, before it comes to a decision on the section submitted to it.

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Mr. WEBER knows the whole country better perhaps than any other man in the district, and short as the time at his disposal may be, he should ascertain a good deal of valuable information regarding depressions on the western side of the range, and incline grades on the eastern that could be connected by tunnels of no great length. He has started on his tour of inspection of the country in question, and we understand that the scope of his explorations is from Jamberoo on the south to Mount Kembla on the north. All Illawarra men who know the country at the back of the mountain range well, and take an interest in the district and its welfare, should volunteer to Mr. WEBER all information and assistance within their power to enable him to give to the Public Works Committee every possible particular in the limited time at his, and their disposal, on the subject in the present circumstances.

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The nature of the report rendered by Mr. WEBER may advance or retard the Illawarra-Robertson railway project more than most people imagine. It is highly essential therefore that he should have as much information of a favorable character as possible at his disposal, before sending in his report, and perhaps giving evidence as well on the subject before the committee. Intelligent Illawarra men, familiar with the features of the country at the back of the mountain range should be of invaluable assistance to Mr. Weber and the project, should labor of love inspiration induce them to give their aid in connection with the matter. But if such assistance be given it must be done at once, if at all, as he has only about a fortnight to complete his exploration. As a matter of fact, the committee are waiting for it, in order that they may consider what influence the projected through line between the Great Southern and Illawarra railways may have upon them in deciding regarding the Bowral-Robertson section submitted to them. With the

construction of an extension of the line down the mountain into Illawarra ascertained to be a reasonable possibility, approval of the Robertson section will be pretty well assured, but otherwise, very doubtful. As a matter of course, all particulars ascertained by Mr. WEBER if considered worthy of further investigation will be tested subsequently by railway experts in that direction.

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We understand that he intends to make the Robertson locality his headquarters during his exploration and that he intends to devote every possible hour of the short time he has available to the work of the important mission he has in hand. And every man from Jamberoo to Kembla who may be able and willing to assist him should not be "backward in coming forward" for that purpose. A private survey of the Macquarie Pass route made by Mr. WEBER a few years ago at the instance of the Member for the District led eventually to that splendid mountain road of to day being constructed. It is to be hoped that a similar remark may be made in the near future regarding the result of his present exploration for a railway line over the same mountain range—be the most favorable route ascertained to be where it may between the northern and southern

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points mentioned.