

## To Kosciusko by Rail?

### ROUTE UP THE SNOWY VALLEY.

The late Mr. Eddy, Commissioner for Railways, had the idea of connecting Kosciusko by rail, and had he lived doubtless the project would have come to fruition. As the final station would have been somewhere in the Snowy Valley, beyond Charlotte's Pass, we can assume that our sport would have advanced considerably beyond the stage it has reached to-day had the railway been constructed.

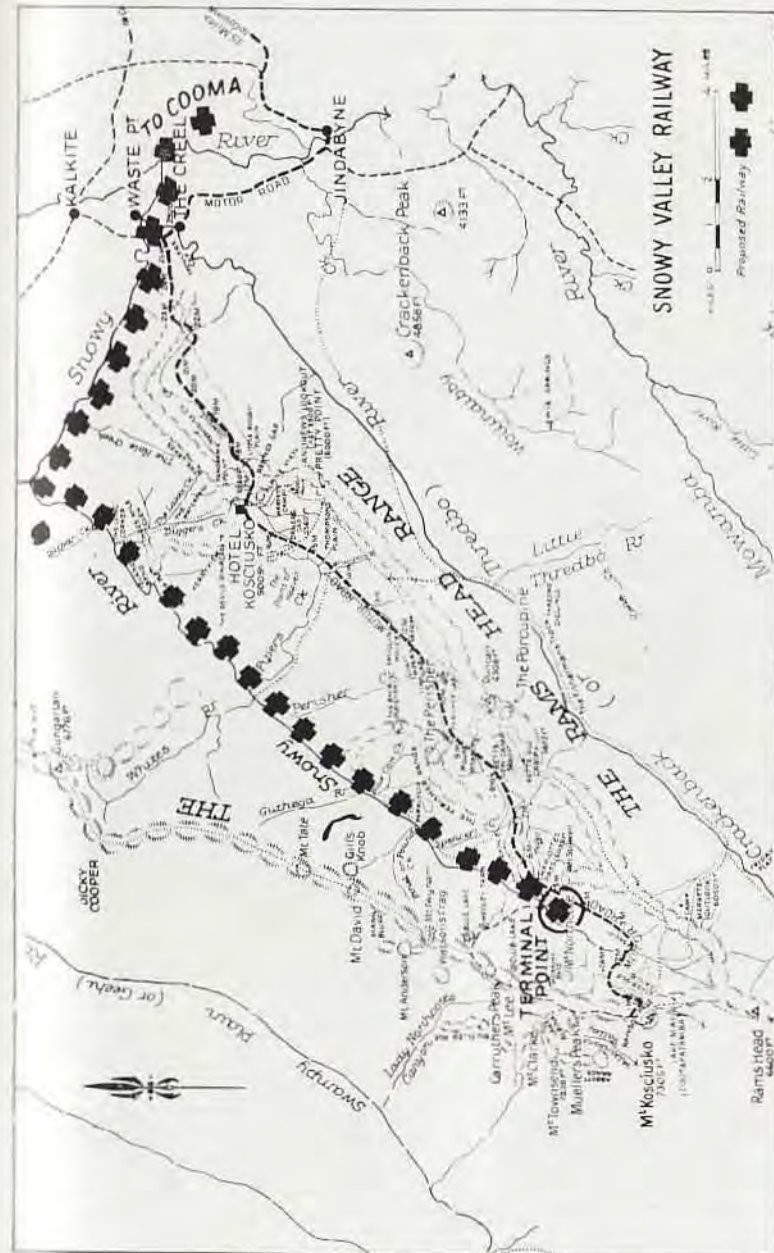
The line would have traversed the Snowy Valley from the junction of the Encumbene just about where the present road bridge crosses the Thredbo at the Creel, and it could have been kept free from snow by the use of snow sheds such as are erected over the railways in the Sierra Nevadas and Canadian Rockies.

The project was reported upon in March, of 1900, but at the hands of an unsympathetic surveyor it received short shrift and went no further. Backed by a man like Mr. Eddy, there is no doubt that Premier Carruthers would have constructed the line. All ski-runners and lovers of Australia should agitate for it.

The report of Surveyor Stuart traces the proposed line from Barney's Range, a little distance from Berridale, as follows:—Passing round a spur the line follows the Cooma-Jindabyne road and down the valley of Rush's Creek to within a few miles of Jindabyne; from this point the line would bear northerly, and after crossing the Snowy River would follow up the course of that river on its left-hand side, crossing the Crackenback River, Digger's Creek, Piper's Creek, the Perisher Creek and Spencer's Creek, en route, and would end on a plateau near the head of the Snowy, about 334 miles from Sydney, within a mile of the summit of Mount Kosciusko and nearly 1,000 feet below it.

In locating this line, on the standard gauge portion, I have arrived at a limiting grade of 1 in 40, with 10 chain curves; in places this will be difficult to obtain, especially in the crossing of Barney's Range, and in the descent from the upper part of Rush's Creek Valley to the Snowy River; this portion of the route would compare very favorably with the present main line from Goulburn to Cooma.

On the narrow gauge portion of the line, that up the Snowy River, the 1 in 40 grade can be maintained without any difficulty up to Piper's Creek, thence steeper grades will have to be employed, the



Map showing route of proposed railway up the Snowy Valley to the foot of Mount Kosciusko. The line would pass within three miles of the Hotel Kosciusko.

curvature throughout will be very much sharper, this latter is necessitated by the bends in the river and the very steep sidlings, cutting into it, the mountain on both sides rising to heights of from 2 to 3 thousand feet above the river and the sidlings in places being very steep and precipitous, especially between Piper's Creek and the end of the Perisher Range; further up the slopes get easier, gradually merging into boggy flats before the foot of Mount Koseinsko is reached.

Owing to the very circuitous route up the Snowy River and the heavy nature of the country encountered, I examined that taken by the present track which after a quick rise from the Snowy River practically follows the summit of the Ram's Head Range; this I found



CROSSING THE PERISHER PLAIN.  
The Perisher Mountain in the Background.

was impracticable, the rise in the first ten miles after leaving the Thredbo crossing being about 3,000 feet and that not continuous but broken into alternative rises and flats; and even if this ascent had been possible the summit of the range, although approximately level, is very broken, necessitating a large amount of curvature and in places heavy works.

Taken as a whole the line would be difficult and expensive to construct, especially on the upper or narrow gauge portion where there would be no facilities for getting material brought up, other than by the line itself, and on this part the waterways would require

to be large to permit of the rapid discharge of flood waters and to allow for the melting snow; this latter would also interfere with and impede the progress of the works.

Speaking generally as far as local requirements are concerned, there is nothing to justify a railway, even as far as Jindabyne, so the whole proposal would have to rest upon its merits as a tourist line.

The life of the season available for tourists would be precarious. First, owing to the heavy falls of snow which would block the upper portion of the route and throw that section idle for the time being; and secondly, even under the most favorable conditions, the climate near the summit is so variable as not to throw out much recommendation for the locality as a sanatorium.

If it were considered advisable to make a railway of a cheap character, I would recommend it not being carried further than the foot of the ranges, say, to the end of the proposed standard gauge section a few miles north of Jindabyne. This, if carried out of the usual type, would probably cost about £5,000 a mile, but a very considerable saving could be made by using sharper curves and steeper grades.

The different lengths by the diagram map are:—

- Standard gauge section, 42 miles.
- Narrow gauge section, 26 miles.

This latter length would probably be considerably increased in order to maintain the gradients with a minimum of work

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The Swedes learned to ski from the Lapps and Finns, who were the first to ski in Scandinavia. The Swedes probably began to ski during the Viking era, when they were settling into the northern part of the country, where the farms and villages would have been isolated during a greater part of the year but for ski.

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In an interesting article on racing innovations in the "British Year Book," the following summing up appears:—"The Downhill race is an admirable test of courage, balance and judgment. The Slalom race is the best test of accurate turning at high speed. The Roped race is an excellent training for roped skiing among the glaciers. The No-fall race teaches ski-runners to raise the speed at which they can run with the absolute certainty of not falling. The Cross-country race introduces Langlauf technique without making a present of the race to the Langlaufer."