

OUR CAÑONS.

We were glad to notice that the county commissioners on Monday were considering some plan to open the Cheyenne cañons to the public. It is a question of vital importance to this city. Our prosperity in a large measure depends on making this city and its surroundings attractive and easy of access to tourists and health seekers. Three years ago we had three cañons near to the city open to the public. The road to Bear Creek cañon has been closed since the government abandoned its trail through the cañon to the Peak. It can only be reached now by passing through private grounds and then only on foot or horseback. Both North and South Cheyenne cañons are owned by private parties and their beauty can be viewed and comforts enjoyed only by the payment of tolls. Our most beautiful scenery is now no longer as free as the air. This was our boast. We had the free enjoyment of these beautiful resorts so long that we did not realize their value until they were taken from us. We now feel the need of them and see the mistake of ever allowing them to become private property.

It is almost a necessity to those who live here during the summer to have the free use of these cañons. The heat in summer is so great, that frequent visits to the cool shade of our cañons is essential to good health. Many of our people can afford to pay the toll, though it is a burden, but it should be remembered that another class of our population that perhaps most needs the use of the cañons is debarred from their use by the tolls. Those in easy circumstances can go farther away to Manitou park, Estes park or Palmer Lake. But our people who work for a living cannot afford this. Nor can they afford on their only leisure day to take their families to the cañons and pay the tolls. This class must either go to Manitou or seek dryer and less refreshing places like Austin's bluffs.

We need the cañons for our tourists if we wish them to come again, or speak well of us abroad. There is nothing that injures the reputation of a tourist's resort so much as petty charges to see everything worth seeing. Parties coming here from the far east do not expect to find a second Niagara Falls. They think that the country is so large and the grand scenery so abounding that tolls would be as impracticable as charges for breathing our fresh, clear and bracing air. It is likely to force this class into other parts of the state, much to our loss.

We think most of our people appreciate the situation and will not favor letting the cañons go to private parties and be no longer free or easy of access. Something should be done and now is the best opportunity. We are not familiar with the laws, but there ought to be some way by which the city or county can acquire the ownership of these cañons and keep them forever free to the public. So far as we know there are no parties claiming ownership to Bear Creek cañon. It is only necessary to open a county road to it. The Cheyenne cañons have been bought and improved by private parties. It is only right that these parties should be paid a reasonable amount for these cañons. If they will sell, as we understand they will, some plan should be devised to buy the cañons out of public moneys, as they will directly contribute to the prosperity of our city. We cannot imagine any more judicious use of the public funds. If this matter is not settled now, it may be practically impossible to do anything in the near future. We urge this matter on the attention of the city and county officials and trust some definite action will soon be taken.

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