

March 10

95

THE CANAL QUESTION.

SOUTH COTTONWOOD,
February 24, 1880.

Editor's Deseret News:

As there has been considerable correspondence published of late concerning water rights and the propriety of constructing canals for the purpose of bringing out the surplus water of the public streams of the Territory, to be used for irrigation and other purposes, I have been watching the questions and answers very attentively.

In looking over the proceedings and doings of the session of the legislature just closed, I was somewhat surprised to find they had passed a bill giving to Salt Lake City a special right of way for a canal. My first thought was, can it be possible that there was no law giving a right of way for a canal for public purposes? If there was not, the different canals now being built were commenced by a great many individuals or companies with as little foresight as the City Council had in commencing to build their canal without any chance to get a right of way by law, or without being empowered to do so by the Salt Lake City Charter.

Being somewhat interested in the East Jordan Canal, I began to inquire if we had spent \$40,000 or \$50,000 dollars in commencing to build a canal to the Little Cottonwood Creek, a distance of about 18 miles, without any law to sustain us in claiming a right of way, but I am informed that the Statutes of the Territory already provided a right of way for canals for public purposes through private lands if there was no other practicable route for said canal or ditch.

I suppose that the council of Salt Lake City thought there was a possibility of them not being able to claim a right of way for another canal so close to the East Jordan Canal, as in some places it would make two large canals running through the same man's land and cutting it up into a very bad shape, especially as the East Jordan Canal Company had made an offer to the city council to unite and bring their water together in one canal to the Little Cottonwood Creek, by each company paying half the expense to said point, and there dividing the water equally, each one bearing his proportion of loss by seepage and evaporation. This seems to me to have been a very fair offer and would have been much better for the public in many ways, as there would not have been so much waste by seepage and evaporation in one canal as in two and it seems to me to be an everlasting monument of disunion, a little like two division fences close to each other. But there is another great question to be considered about the two canals. I think that we can safely say that three-fourths of the water for the land to be watered from the upper one will have to be conducted across the city canal, and it seems to me that the cost of procuring the right of way and building the canal will be small in comparison to what it will be to keep up flumes and bridges for every man that has his land to water from the upper canal, as that will be an eternal expense. Then I suppose the city will be liable for all consequential damage. This may be a heavy expense, as the proposition is to dig the canal three feet deep and run four feet of water in it. This will necessitate the flooding of the land about 15 inches deep before the waste water can run off the land above the canal, and in some places where the land is level this will flood and kill out a great many acres of grain, etc.

Another question to be considered is, the city canal is not supposed to be tapped until it gets along toward Salt Lake City. The number of men it will require to watch it will altogether depend upon how well the flumes and troughs are kept in repair, as the most of us are so constituted that if our individual water could not be brought across the canal to our land we should not let our crops suffer much before we would tap the canal.

Another reason why it seems to me it would have been better to have only had one canal: If there ever comes a time when it may be advisable to boat coal as was suggested by one of your correspondents, from Spanish Fork to Salt Lake City, there might be water enough to do so by it being kept in one body, or if there is water enough to run a boat down the city canal I think it would be impracticable to run their boats over the county dam and down to the city canal to where it is now located. Respectfully,

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