

TRAVEL IN MOUNTAIN PARKS INCREASED HEAVILY

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Count of automobiles entering Lookout and Morrison gateways shows that there were 116,292 during June, July and August of 1918, as against 66,507 cars for a corresponding period the summer before. Decrease in tourists, due to the war, is indicated for the same period by comparison.

The effect of the war upon automobile tourist travel is clearly shown in a report compiled for the National Park Service in connection with the Mt. Evans, or Denver National Park Project. Although there was an enormous increase in the number of machines and people entering the Denver Mountain Parks, there was a decrease in the number of out-of-state cars. During June, July, and August, 1918 the cars that passed through the Mountain Parks gateways numbered 116,292. Estimating four persons to a car, the number of individuals entering the parks during this period by automobile alone, was 465,174. The percentage of out-of-state motorists, was 12%. During the same period in 1917 the number of cars passing through the gateways was 66,507, carrying 303,882 persons. The percentage of out-of-state cars was 24.

The estimates were made from counts taken for the state highway commission during the month of August, each year. It shows that during August 1918, the traffic was divided as follows: on the main arteries: South Golden (concrete highway), 18,348 cars and 73,393 people; Morrison road 15,120 cars and 60,480 people; North Golden Road, 5,296 cars and 21,184 people. Of the entire number of cars entering the Mountain Parks during the three summer months last year 24,543 were through cars that passed over the Idaho Springs road. In order to limit the figures to tourist and pleasure travel,



the count of horse-drawn vehicles was not included.

An analysis of the register at the city's new motor camp in Rocky Mountain Park also shows a decrease in the number of out-of-state cars, but it is not so noticeable here, as very few Denver people use this camp. In the City Park auto camp during 1917 there were 3,063 cars parked carrying 12,288 individuals, while in Rocky Mountain Lake Park last summer there were parked 2,894 cars carrying 10,901 visitors. Thirty-eight states of the Union were represented at one time or another.

In addition, there were motor visitors from Calgary, Winnipeg, and Manitoba, Canada; Scagway, Alaska and Honolulu. The great bulk of the tourist motorists came from the Mississippi and Missouri River Valleys, Kansas sending 682 cars and 2,582 people, while Nebraska sent 646 cars and 2,589 people.

It should be borne in mind, however, and this is borne out by the figures at the auto camps, that the decreased percentage in out-of-state cars, reported in the Mountain Parks, is more apparent than real. Denver residents used the Mountain Parks more than ever before, and had the actual number of out-of-state cars been exactly that of the previous year, a large

decrease in the percentage would have been recorded because of Denver's more extensive use of her parks.

The summer of 1919 is expected to be the largest tourist season in Colorado history, for the necessity of limiting European travel because of government need for ships, will prevent any exodus of Americans to Europe the coming summer. The fact that the government discouraged purely pleasure travel last summer, and urged conservation of gasoline, served to keep many at home and they will be anxious now to "hit the trail" once more.

In connection with the mountain park travel it is interesting to note that, in addition to the \$480,000 spent by Denver on these parks, the state and the county of Jefferson have spent on Jefferson County roads connecting Denver, and the Parks and the Bear Creek concrete bridges \$376,031 from 1913 to 1918 inclusive. Of this amount the total state appropriations during the six years amounted to \$275,432 while the county spent \$100,599.

The state highway commission figures show that, for the same period, a total of \$5,349,730.65 has been spent on state roads in Districts 4 and 5, also in Larimer, El Paso, Lake, Park, Teller, Custer, Fremont, Huerfano, and Las Animas counties.

These figures will have an important bearing upon the Denver National Park bill, for Congress will take into consideration the attitude of the state upon road questions, and its effort to link up the various parks and monuments by beautiful scenic roads.

Men of broad vision expect that the decade following the conclusion of peace, will go down in history as 'the most stupendous road building era that the country has witnessed. The federal government is taking up the question of highway transport from the broad viewpoint, and it is inconceivable that development of national park roadways throughout the country will keep pace with this movement. Where the people go, there must provision be made for their comfort and entertainment, and the fact that Denver is the gateway to all national parks of the west, is the best guarantee that Mt. Evans road will be built.