

ANGRY VERMONT MINERS

WHAT CAUSED THE STRIKE IN THE VERSHIRE COPPER MILLS.

HISTORY OF THE VERMONT COPPER MINING COMPANY—THE MINERS AFRAID OF LOS- ING THE WAGES DUE THEM.

Smith Ely, President of the Vermont Copper Mining Company, at Vershire, Vt., is lying at the Summer residence of his nephew, ex-Mayor Smith Ely, Jr., at Livingseon, N. J., ill from the effects of the fright into which he was thrown last Tuesday by the miners in his employ. Mr. Ely is more than 83 years of age, is almost entirely incapacitated from business cares, and is partially blind. He was for many years a resident of this City, and has been identified with several enterprises of importance. He was once engaged in the manufacture of rattan furniture, and founded the business now carried on by the Wakefield Rattan Company. Before leaving New-York he was largely interested in the leather trade. More than 20 years ago he went to Vermont and invested extensively in the copper mines which had but a short time before been discovered in the vicinity of what is now called the village of Vershire. He organized the present mining company. Work was pushed with energy, and it is said that millions of pounds of ore were taken out annually and sold. Improvements were made to keep pace with the growing business. The mine was excavated to the unusual depth of 3,000 feet, and one of the largest smelting furnaces in New-England was erected. More than \$1,000,000, it is alleged, were spent in improvements, and at the time the profits apparently justified the expenditure. Until very recently 800 men were kept constantly employed, and the number often exceeded 1,000. Everything went swimmingly until a few years ago. The improvements had not all been paid for. The copper market was declining, the product of the mine was decreasing, and the price of labor increasing. The company ran behind. Mr. Ely, being a large stockholder, had advanced various sums of money, and the other stockholders had made similar sacrifices.

It was finally determined to reorganize the company and fund the obligations, which were oppressively large. Accordingly, some time during April, 1882, the property was transferred to Smith Goddard, of this City, a grandson of President Ely, who represented his grandfather in the new deal, and F. M. F. Cazin, a mining engineer, to hold in trust until a new company could be organized. Three weeks afterward the organization was completed, with Smith Goddard as President; L. S. Phillips, an attorney of this City, as Secretary, and F. M. F. Cazin as Superintendent. All the debts of the old company were discharged by a mortgage of \$500,000, which was placed on the property. Of this \$300,000 was given to the old company and the remainder to the general creditors. After continuing in control of the property for eight months the new company returned it into the hands of its predecessor, which was reorganized as follows: President—Smith Ely; Vice-President—Ex-Gov. Roswell Farnham, of Vermont, who also acted as general counselor for the concern; Secretary and Treasurer—C. C. Sargent, and Superintendent, Daniel F. Long. The new company, however, did not go out of existence, and probably will not until some decision is reached in the numerous lawsuits which have grown out of its organization. Mr. Cazin, who was thrown out of employment by the change in the ownership, has involved his former associates in some additional litigation.

The financial agent of the company in this City said to a TIMES reporter yesterday afternoon in the office of De Kay & Hartly, general counselors to the company, No. 115 Broadway, that the miners had no cause to strike. They were usually promptly paid, he said, and many of them had worked in the mines for 20 years. The usual custom was to keep back one month's pay and they were at present less than two months behind. The company would have paid them what was due them as readily without as with coercion. Much of it had already been paid, the financial agent declared. Several thousand dollars were taken to the mines on Wednesday last and more was sent yesterday. The remainder will follow as soon as it is raised. The agent attributed the riot to the interference of new men from the Pennsylvania mining districts and the circulation of reports damaging to the company's credit. Last month, he said, the stock on hand was allowed to run down and the men, excited by the reports, became impatient because new articles were not bought.

Last Sunday night they put themselves under the control of their ring leaders and began active warfare. The explosives were first seized. On Monday morning when the store was opened they rushed in and took possession. The watchman, it is said, was taken down to the water and stripped of his clothing, and had to beg on his knees to save himself from being drowned. The strikers next visited Whitney's saloon, armed with stones, bricks, pistols, and guns, and raided the place, smashing the bottles, opening the barrels, and raising Cain generally. They took complete possession of Vershire, which contains about 150 houses, and then visited the adjoining village, West Fairlee, which was also conquered without shedding a drop of blood. The handsome residence of Smith Goddard was seized, and on Tuesday Cazin was driven from the town by the mob. He was only given time enough to pack his furniture. As he was driving through the streets with his family he was saluted with groans and hisses. He went to West Fairlee, but was expelled from there on Wednesday, and his present whereabouts are not known. The same day the rioters surrounded the house of a citizen named Bigelow, where President Smith Ely boarded. There were more than 300 men in the crowd, all said to have been armed. They attempted to force an entrance into the house, with the avowed intention of killing the President, but were met at the front door by a show of revolvers, which compelled a halt. Another attempt was made, in which a sturdy domestic took a riotous miner by his coat collar and hustled him unceremoniously down the front steps. After these two failures a committee of five was appointed to hold a conference with the President. They were admitted, and their demands for pay were acceded to. Mr. Ely promised the men their wages in full as soon as the money could be secured. When this was reported to the miners it failed to satisfy them. They wanted their money without delay, and a third raid was made upon the house, but without effect. They wanted the President. They wanted to hang him. Again they were repulsed. On Wednesday the agent paid the scene a visit, and was met at the train at Bradford by ex-Gov. Farnham. When they reached the grounds they were greeted with loud cheers, and the ready money which they had brought produced a quieting effect on the crowd. On the same evening the agent returned to this City, bringing Mr. Ely with him, entirely prostrated by the shock of the previous day. Since then the miners have been in open insurrection. The financial agent sent more money yesterday, and will make another remittance next week. The debt has already been largely reduced. The men have been threatening to burn the town to the ground if their money was not forthcoming by last night, but the militia was ordered to the village to prevent any such threats from being carried into effect.

Mr. Sidney De Kay, one of the company's attorneys, said that the miners were in some cases well-to-do, and often voluntarily allowed the company to retain the wages for four and five months. Mr. L. S. Phillips, Secretary of the retiring company, declared that the amount due the miners was in reality not more than \$17,000.

ELY, Vt., July 7.—Four companies of State troops arrived here early this morning and found the streets deserted, the riotous miners not expecting them. Gov. Barstow and other State officials accompanied the troops. Eleven of the ringleaders have been arrested, and no resistance was made. Much sympathy is expressed for the miners. Some families are on the verge of starvation. Some women, with children in their arms, have appealed to the troops for assistance. Money has been raised to relieve their immediate wants. The mining company proposes to pay \$2,500 of their indebtedness to the men at once, \$2,000 next week, and the balance, \$15,500, as soon as the one now in process of refinement can be put through and shipped. It is thought the danger is over.