

LLANBERIS SLATE COMPANY

The annual general meeting of shareholders was held at the company's offices, Sise-lane, Bucklersbury on Tuesday.

Mr HENRY HAYMEN in the chair.

Mr. W.Fletcher, jun. (the secretary) having read the notice convening the meeting, the directors' report was read, as follows:-

The directors consider it expedient to make an entire change in the system hitherto pursued of working the quarry, and desire, therefore to make its proprietors fully acquainted with the reasons for taking this important step. Feeling very dissatisfied with the slow progress made, and the failure in the estimates and predictions of the late resident manager, Mr Emerson, the directors instituted a searching investigation into the cause, and arrived at the conclusion that the capital of the company would not suffice to complete the works necessary before the open workings could yield a profit. The deadwork not only proved to be very much heavier than had been anticipated, but when the floors were cleared, it was found that the slate rock reached had been so much affected by weather action, that the slates made would not pay their cost. This latter fact would have been discovered much earlier, but for the circumstance that the greater part of the cost of winning the slate rock had been improperly placed in the deadwork account, thus conveying the impression to the directors that the slate produced were made at a profit.

Several months back the attention of the board had been directed to the tunnelling machine patented by Messrs. Cooke and Hunter, and the directors, therefore, deputed their colleague, Mr. Elliott, who had strongly advocated its employment, to watch it's action. The tunnelling machine having been practically tested at the Maen Offeren Quarry, it was proved capable of forming a tunnel 7ft. in diameter at the rate forward of 9 feet per diem, and of producing in its progress a large proportion of rock available for slate making. According to the calculations made by the patentees, the process of making a tunnel on their system, through good slate rock, leaves a large profit on the operation, in addition to the prospective returns to be obtained from the mass of rock thus unroofed. To form such a tunnel by hand labour would cost £4 per yard forward, occupy sixfold time, and waste the whole of the slate excavated. The time and cost must be expended in any attempt to work the quarry by hand chambering seemed thus to place that method beyond the means of the company. Mr Griffith Ellis having again inspected the quarry, and stated that the appearance of the rock was very promising, and a trial tunnel on NO.9 floor into some depth having yielded excellent slate rock, the directors felt assured that satisfactory results would be obtained if by any means they could win the rock, of which there appears to be an inexhaustible quantity. At the depth it was proved to be free from those injurious influences which rendered the outcrop unprofitable.

Negotiations were, therefore, opened with Messrs Cooke and Hunter, who at first asked a considerable sum for the license of each machine, and a heavy royalty on the slates produced. On inspecting the quarry and satisfying themselves of the great quantity and excellent quality of the rock it contained, these gentlemen offered to waive all claim for licences and royalty in consideration of 1800 shares being allotted to them, £4-10s per share being considered as paid on each share, leaving Messrs Cooke and Hunter with a liability of £1000, which they agreed to pay as follows:- £100 down and £900 towards redeeming the debentures in June 1869. As it was most important not to lose time, this proposal was accepted by the directors, and the first machine ordered, which is now at the quarry, and has commenced work. Admitting that the slate rock in depth answers to the indications obtained, the directors entertain little doubt that by the aid of the tunnelling machines the quarry will soon be converted into a very valuable property. Heavy and unsatisfactory as the outlay has proved, a good deal of the work done can hereafter be turned to good account, and the interest on the whole cost, inclusive of the purchase of the freehold, would not exceed the royalty that would be required under a leasehold on the quantity of slates likely to be produced. Under the circumstances of the past year the directors, whose own stake in the company is so large, have felt deeply their responsibility to the shareholders, whose interests they claim to have studied most carefully, and trust to have served effectively. The proprietors will remember that in April last, in order that the working of the quarry should not be stopped for want of funds, the obtained the consent of the shareholders to issue debentures. These debentures were offered to the shareholders, but only £950 were subscribed for, and the directors, to help the company, then took up

£6400. There are still £2650 of these debentures unissued, and the directors trust the shareholders will come forward and aid them in carrying on the works by taking up their proportion. The directors are happy to be able to inform the shareholders that one of the patentees of the tunnelling machine, William Fothergill Cooke, Esq., whose name is so well-known to the world as the inventor of the electric telegraph, has consented to join the board.

The CHAIRMAN, in moving the adoption of the report, said that it fully explained all that had been done in the year. At the last meeting Mr Emerson, their then manager, promised certain things which had not been carried out, since which the agreement with that gentleman had been cancelled. The board had also had considerable financial difficulties to contend with, two shareholders only coming forward to assist in taking up the debentures; but the directors, not having lost faith in the property, had subscribed £6400. Their colleague, Mr Elliott, had undertaken to visit the quarry monthly and superintend the working, and by the aid of Messrs Cooke and Hunter's tunnelling machine, which saved the slate through which it cut, and which under the present mode of working was wasted in blasting, the slate rock would become of commercial value to the company. The directors hoped that at the next meeting they would have to report a very different state of affairs.

Mr J.ELLIOTT fully bore out all that had been stated respecting the manner in which the quarry had been worked by their late manager, Mr Emerson. At the same time, he was much pleased with the working of Messrs Cooke and Hunter's machine, and which he (Mr Elliott) fully believed would enable them to make good profit directly they got into the productive slate rock.

Mr W F Cooke, having explained the working of the tunnelling machine, said that he had great faith in the value of the property, and to test its value had not hesitated to embark his money in it.

The CHAIRMAN, in reply to shareholder, entered fully into the matter between Mr Emerson and the board.

The report and accounts were received and adopted. Messrs Quilter, Ball & Co. were re-elected auditors and a vote of thanks to the Chairman terminated the proceedings.

Some additional notes GI.

Robert Hesketh Esquire Deceased dated 14 July 1868 had shares in the CO.

(Nothing to do with the Llanberis Slate Company (Limited) of 1879:

Capital £60,000 in shares of £10. To work, win, and make slates, slate slabs, stone, rock, and earths of all descriptions, and to carry on the business of merchants and dealers in all like articles. In particular to work the Goodman and Cambrian Quarries, near Llanberis, Carnarvon. The subscribers (who take one share each) are T.H.G. Newton, Henley-in-Arden; J. Wotherspoon, Glasgow; W.L. Lamb, Greenock; G. Lamb, Glasgow; W. Wotherspoon, Glasgow; J. Menzies, Carnarvon; W.B. Jeffrey, Carnarvon.)