

## ***The Times***

Friday 19 April 1912

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT)

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MONTREAL, APRIL 18

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A message by wireless telegraphy from the Carpathia was received at the offices of the Grand Trunk Railway Company in Montreal this morning signed by Mrs. Hays, wife of the President of the Grand Trunk Railway, stating that she and her daughter are safe, and adding "no news my husband."

This message dispels the last gleam of hope which was being entertained at the headquarters of the Grand Trunk as to the possible escape of Mr. Hays.

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The above message, unfortunately, leaves little room for doubting that one of the most distinguished of the railway organizers of the American continent has lost his life in the disaster to the Titanic. Charles Melville Hays was born at Rock Island, Illinois, on May 16, 1856, and was educated at public schools and at the Rock Island High School. He began work, when 17 years of age, in the passenger department of the Atlantic and Pacific Railway at St. Louis, Missouri, and in a short time was transferred to the auditors' department, and subsequently to the General Superintendent's office, where his ability and aptitude for his chosen calling soon became manifest. In 1878, after five years of railway experience, he was appointed secretary to the general manager of the Missouri Pacific, a position which he retained until 1884, when he joined the Wabash, St. Louis, and Pacific Railway in a similar capacity. Two years later Mr. Hays was appointed assistant general manager of that company, and in 1887 became general manager of the Wabash Western. Again two years later he was appointed general manager of the reorganized Wabash system, and in 1894 was elected a vice-president of the company.

Mr. Hays first became associated with the Grand Trunk Railway system in January 1896, when he succeeded Mr. L. J. Seargeant as general manager, but relinquished this office five years later to become president of the Southern Pacific Railway, but returned to the Grand Trunk in a few months as second vice-president and general manager. On the retirement of Sir Charles Rivers Wilson in October, 1909, Mr. Hays was elected president, while retaining his position as general manager. Notwithstanding the exacting responsibilities inseparable from the management of such a large undertaking, Mr. Hays was connected in a directorial capacity with many other businesses, among them being the London and Lancashire Life Assurance Company (Canadian Board), Merchants' Bank of Canada, Royal Trust Company,

and the United States Mortgage and Trust Company. He was elected president of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway in 1905, and was also a member of the Permanent Commission of the International Railway Congress.

The rise of Mr. Hays from the position of an unimportant clerkship to the highest rank of railroad management has been attributed more to a capacity for long and arduous labour than to special genius for railway work, though the rapidity with which he rose to the position of general manager of the Wabash Western would indicate the possession of more than ordinary talent. His devotion to work left him with little time for social pleasures, and he was reported to have had few intimate friends, but public organizations and charitable institutions knew him as a generous supporter. Sir Wilfrid Laurier once described Mr. Hays as "a valuable acquisition to Canada, a thorough Canadian at heart," and among the encomiums which have been bestowed upon him by the Press on both sides of the Atlantic was that the president of the Grand Trunk was a splendid example of what brains, pluck, and industry could overcome and accomplish.

One who met Mr. Hays after he succeeded Sir Charles R. Wilson said that he had that contact with great affairs which leaves a stamp of its own upon the men who handle great affairs. He could discuss with ease very complicated matters of railway business. Shareholders of the Grand Trunk will remember him, perhaps, chiefly for the improvement which he was able to effect in the fortunes of that undertaking.

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Courtesy of Mark Baber

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