

program, a role for which he was well suited. He began working on steamships on Lake Ontario's Bay of Quinte in 1890, and by 1905 he was captain of the *Augustus B. Wolvin*, the largest vessel on the Great Lakes. The *Wolvin* was owned by the Acme Steamship Company of Duluth and managed by Roy Mitchell Wolvin. In 1907, Norcross and Wolvin embarked upon several mergers and acquisitions of shipping companies that were a major factor in the formation of Canada Steamship Lines in 1913.²⁶ While Wolvin preferred to keep a low profile, Norcross assumed a more public role as the company's vice president and managing director. As Flavelle pointed out to the Ministry of Munitions in December 1916, Norcross was "looked upon as probably the ablest steamship manager in Canada."²⁷

Norcross's involvement in the marine sector had already expanded into shipbuilding, taking advantage of a Canada Steamship Lines' bylaw that permitted its directors to become a shareholder or director in any company in which the steamship lines had an interest as vendor or purchaser without any accountability for benefits received.²⁸ He was appointed a director of Canadian Vickers Limited in spring 1916,²⁹ but the year would be dominated by the aggressive accumulation of its competitors. Norcross and Wolvin had been involved with the Western Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Company since 1912, when they gave the company shares in Canadian Interlake Line to complete payment for building the cargo ship *Hamiltonian*.³⁰ They acquired the shipyard in 1916, and reincorporated the firm as the Port Arthur Shipbuilding Company in November. A month later, the Collingwood Shipbuilding Company was taken over by Norcross, Wolvin, and Horace Smith, a lawyer turned furniture manufacturer, with the formal transfer of ownership taking place on 2 January 1917.³¹ Smith served as president, with Norcross and Wolvin as vice presidents and other shareholders drawn from the senior management of Canada Steamship Lines.³² The purchase included Collingwood's subsidiary, the Kingston Shipbuilding Company, which was established in 1910 with Smith as one of its original shareholders. Norcross's network extended east to the Sorel Shipbuilding and Coal Company in Quebec. Established in 26 May 1916 to build, repair, and own ships, it was a subsidiary of Canada Steamship Lines. Its name was changed to Tidewater Shipbuilders Limited

²⁶ M. Stephen Salmon, "'This Unsatisfactory Condition:' The Formation and Financing of Canada Steamship Lines, 1910-1915," *International Journal of Maritime History*, 12:1 (June 2000), 165-175.

²⁷ LAC, MG 26 H, reel C-4318, vol. 76, 39492, J.W. Flavelle to Ministry of Munitions, 28 December 1916.

²⁸ The author wishes to thank Maurice Smith, Curator Emeritus of the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes at Kingston, for pointing out this bylaw.

²⁹ *Marine Engineering of Canada* 6:4 (April 1916), 92.

³⁰ The author is indebted to James Pritchard for generously sharing his research on the business relationship between Roy Wolvin and Joseph Norcross. Unfortunately Dr. Pritchard passed away in 2015 before his work could be completed.

³¹ *The Globe* (Toronto), 7 December 1916, 12.

³² Marine Museum of the Great Lakes at Kingston (hereafter MMGLK), Canada Steamship Lines fonds, 1996.0039.0015, box 1, "Canadian Shipbuilding & Engineering Ltd., Copy of company's by-laws," By-law No. 4, 8 January 1917.