

complicated vessels, and it would be just as easy to lay out a hundred keels as it would be for one.³⁷ Norcross recommended that the work go to Canadian Vickers, the Collingwood Shipbuilding Company, or Canada Steamship Lines' shipyard at Sorel to achieve economies of scale, but he recognized the political importance of spreading around the contracts.

The work was allocated by mid-March, with orders for drifters going to seven builders in three Quebec communities along the St. Lawrence River: thirty hulls to Montreal, twenty hulls to Sorel, and fifty hulls to Levis (see the appendix and the map in figure 1 for the companies involved in the program and their location). These shipyards were less than 250 kilometres apart. Their relatively close proximity to Norcross's offices in Montreal meant that Commander J.W. Skentelbery, the Admiralty's advisor, could maintain a close involvement with drifter construction. Orders for steel trawlers were distributed among eight shipyards that ranged from Port Arthur on Lake Superior to Levis. Contracts for engines and boilers covered an even larger area. Norcross placed as much work in Canada as possible with manufacturers in Winnipeg, Galt, Goderich, St. Catharines, Lachine, Quebec City, and Amherst, but the shortage of Canadian capacity led to contracts for forty-seven engines and forty-two boilers given to American firms in Chicago, Hoboken, Brooklyn, and Jersey City. Work was split between many shipyards and suppliers to achieve maximum production before the close of navigation in order to enhance anti-submarine patrols; as was pointed out to the Collingwood Shipbuilding Company, "Time is of the essence in this contract."³⁸

Figure 1: Location of companies manufacturing hulls, engines, and boilers for Admiralty trawlers and drifters, 1917-1919



Map by C. King, Cartographic Lab, Department of Geography, York University

³⁷ Ibid., J.W. Norcross to J.D. Hazen, 8 February 1917.

³⁸ MMGLK, Collingwood Shipbuilding Company fonds, 1982.0168.0001, box 1, "Contracts for hulls 44, 46-47, 49-60," Contract between the King in the right of Canada and Collingwood Shipbuilding Company, 10 May 1917.