

Meanwhile, the province balked at the cost of a new bridge and offered islanders an alternative. The province had just finished building the International Bridge between Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. With the opening of that bridge, ferry service across the St. Mary's River had become redundant, and the province acquired the ferries which had plied that route - the aging AGOMING and the newer and larger JAMES W. CURRAN and JOHN A. McPHAIL. The province offered to pick up all ferry costs and provide two ferries to Wolfe Island, provided that the islanders agreed to a move of the service from Marysville approximately four miles farther east, to Brophy's Point. The proposed route would also land passengers well to the east of Kingston, at Rogers Sideroad on the mainland. This would result in a shorter ferry crossing, which was fine for those who had transportation, but it posed a problem for those without land transportation who resided in Marysville, the island's only village and traditional ferry landing.

Ferry service topped the November 1963 Wolfe Island election agenda. Two car ferries 537 miles away brought more than 150 people to the nomination meeting at the Wolfe Island Township Hall. A keen interest in future transportation between the Island and the mainland resulted in four nominations for Reeve and thirteen for councillor. Three farmers and the incumbent (a guide) were nominated for reeve, while for the four council seats, ten farmers, two labourers and a carpenter were nominated.

Following the official nominations, islanders crowded into the small council building to hear the candidates express themselves on the relocation option. The tone of that meeting evidenced a lack of knowledge of the operation and costs involved with the province's proposal. It was reported that emotions ran high and that the debate saw more than a slight amount of name calling and a greater amount of "heated confusion". Interest was so strong that at least one Kingston resident took the WOLFE ISLANDER to the meeting to challenge the candidates on their stands. One of the council candidates raised the issue of whether a bridge and causeway could be built to Garden Island, and running the ferry from there to Kingston.

Feelings amongst the candidates for Reeve were even stronger than among the council hopefuls. Much mention was made of the drownings which had resulted from residents having to cross unsafe ice. The Reeve stated that young islanders would rather drive across the ice than go all the way out to Brophy's Point, to which a heckler replied that parents should bring their kids up with some sense!

During the meeting, it became evident that not only had positions been taken without sufficient information being available, but that Township Council had received no written notification from the province, nor had any alternative proposals been made. Thus it went to the vote in December and voters rejected the Brophy's Point proposal, as the municipality would have had to operate the ferries. In January of 1963, the province promised Wolfe Islanders free ferry service on a regular 15 minute basis by autumn, and for a lot of islanders, this put the problem in a different light.

The "Kingston Whig Standard" of March 26, 1964, ran a photo of JAMES W. CURRAN under the heading "NEW ISLANDER", stating "this is one of the end-loading car ferries to go into service here this summer between Brophy's Point and Rogers Sideroad on the St. Lawrence North Shore. This ferry and a similar one are to be brought here from Sault Ste. Marie to establish the free 15 minute service." However, such was not to be the case.

We must digress at this point to the afternoon of Wednesday, October 31st, 1962. At 3:00 p.m. on that day, JOHN A. McPHAIL left Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, to cross the St. Mary's River for the last time. Captain Gordon Harrison, a ferry captain for 31 years, was at the wheel. The opening of the International Bridge had ended a ferry service that residents from both countries remember with affection and also with some frustration. Ferry service had begun in 1873 and encompassed 90 years of service utilizing at