

By BRIAN CHRISTMAS
of The Free Press

**ABOARD THE MOUNTAIN-TYPE STEAM
ENGINE 6060** — About 750 people went from
Ilderton to Clinton Sunday the way they used
to many years ago — by steam locomotive.
The 80-mile return trip was the finale of Ilderton's weekend centennial celebration.

"This is what we had a 100 years ago, so we wanted to do it for the kids," said Tom Robson of the centennial committee.

Many people dressed for the occasion, sporting 19th century attire and some with full growths of "centennial beards."

The engine left an intermittent trail of thick, black smoke as it wormed through wheat and

vegetable fields. Herds of livestock were sent into a frenzy by the unfamiliar sight and sound.

Those who couldn't buy the \$10 adult and \$5 children tickets but wanted to be in on the fun, formed a motorcade in hot pursuit on a road which paralleled the rail line part of the way to Clinton.

Many railway crossings had dozens of picture-taking and tape-recording spectators fascinated by the olive green hulk.

Some of the 13 coaches offered quiet air-conditioned comfort.

A brass band "rolled out the barrel" as people sang and ate from picnic baskets.

At Clinton, bagpipers escorted the travellers to a nearby park where a plaque was presented to Clinton Reeve Harold Lobb.

Clinton was chosen as the train's destination because it has a "Y" track enabling it to turn around. The Ilderton centennial committee paid \$9,000 to charter the train, Mr. Robson said.

Allen Brewer, Norm Nicholls and Roy Hick, all long-time employees of CN, were at the controls of the "iron horse."

The engine, built in Montreal in 1944, serviced western provinces until being retired onto a concrete slab in Jasper, Alta., around 1960. Public outcry forced its revival in 1973, said Mr. Brewer, a master mechanic at CN.

The 125-ton locomotive still can travel up to 80 m.p.h., but the condition of the branch line and the age of the engine limited Sunday's average speed to about 30.

"She's not as sharp as she used to be," said Mr. Nicholls.

The 6060 was one of 20 of a model built during the 40s, the others being rendered to scrap or museum pieces years ago.

Its tender originally carried coal but later was converted to oil after good coal became scarce.

"There's something about old steam engines that attracts people," said Mr. Hick, as he and co-engineers manipulated a series of valves, taps and hand-throttles to keep the train going. "They like to see the smoke and stuff and hear the noise."

On Saturday, those too young to remember when steam locomotives were commonplace had a momentary taste, smell and sight of what their moms and dads faced daily.

The 6060 was being fired up at London's CN roundhouse when things "got away for a while."

As flames blistered paint on the exterior of the locomotive's firebox, the southeast section of the London core was clouded over with a thick black smoke.

"That's the way they used to be 30 years ago," a CN spokesman said. "You couldn't see this part of town for the smoke."

London firefighters were called but the locomotive's firemen had things under control.

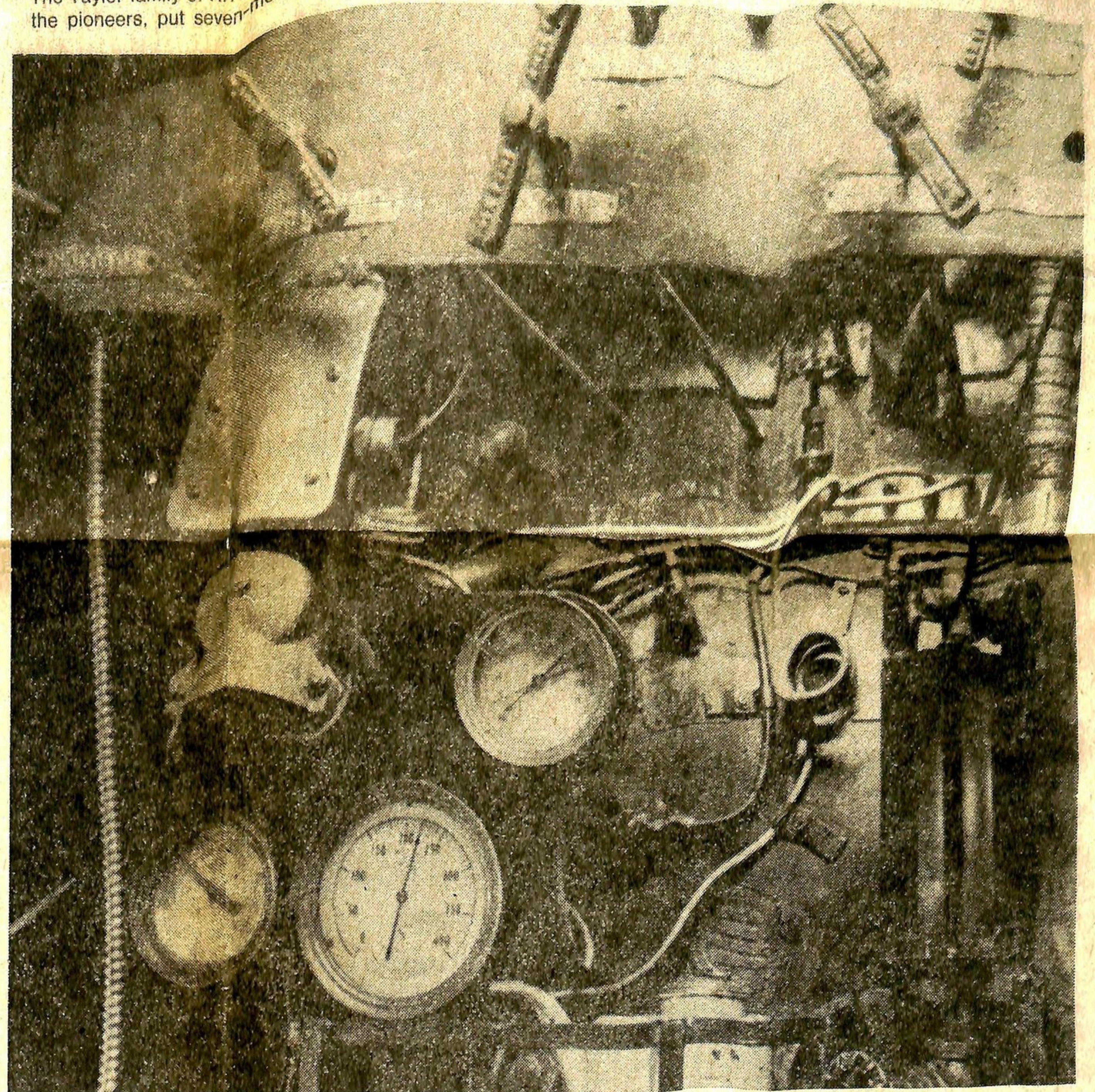
There are about 12 people in Canada capable of running the locomotive, whose activity is mainly in Southern Ontario.

The locomotive was more than an hour late arriving back in London.

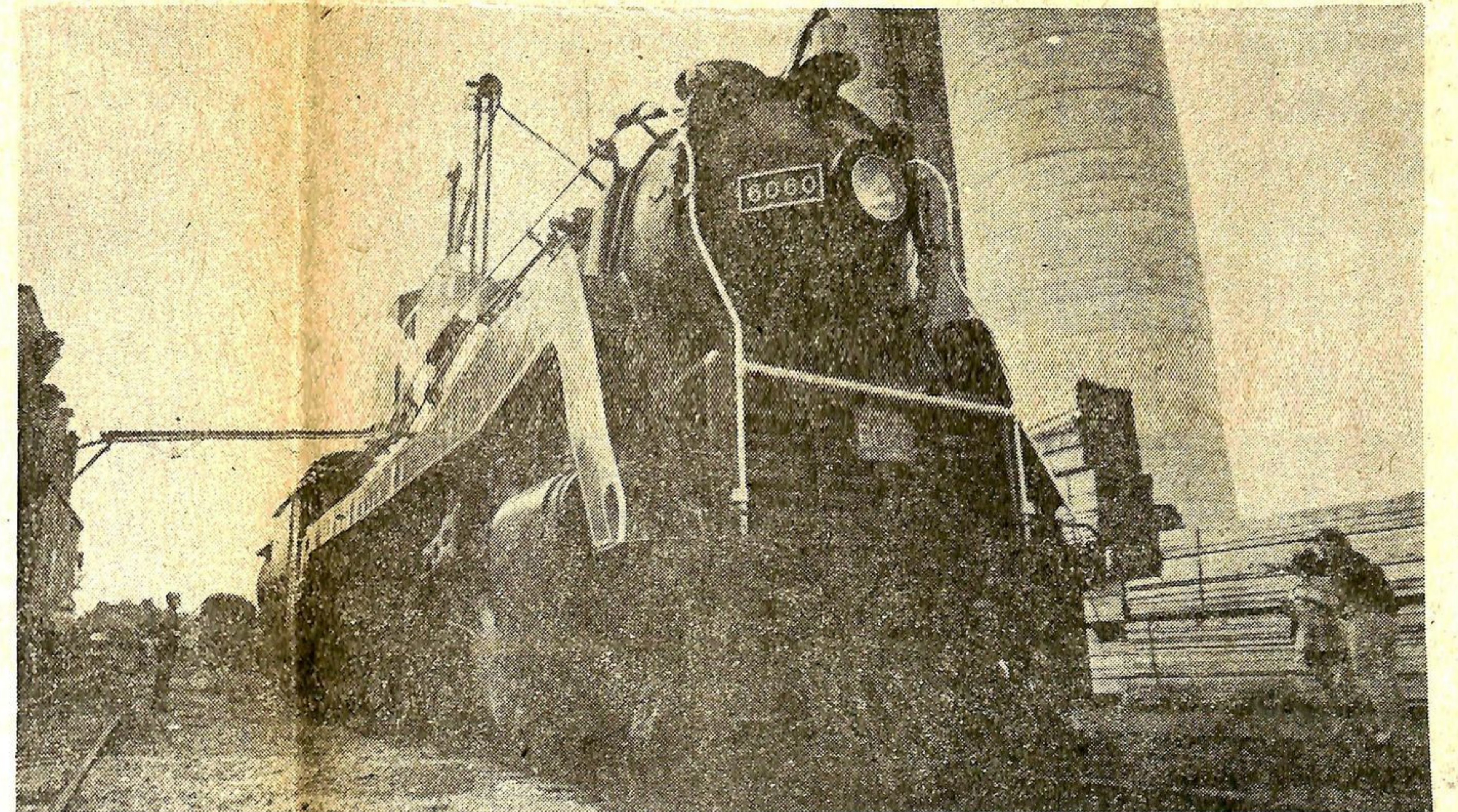
It had to back up seven miles to pick up about 70 London-bound passengers who were inadvertently left in Ilderton.

*Free Press photos
by Bill Ironside
and Rick Eglinton*

The Taylor family of RR 1, Ilderton, dressed in the garb of old baby buggy and marched proudly in the Ilderton centennial parade Saturday. The pioneers, put seven-month-old Adam in an 85-year-



Gauges, faucets and throttles, rather than pushbuttons, control the steam locomotive in the cab of this mountain-type 6060 used in the Ilderton centennial celebration on Sunday.



Built in 1944, retired in 1960 and resurrected in 1973, the locomotive took on about 750 passengers on a return trip from Ilderton to Clinton as part of the centennial. It's the only operational CNR steam locomotive in Canada.

Dressed in 19th century attire, Glenn Reeve hustles passengers aboard the train.