

## **Gordon Lightfoot**

# **"Canadian Railroad Trilogy"**

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There was a time in this fair land when the railroad did  
not run  
When the wild majestic mountains stood alone against  
the sun  
And long before the white man and long before the  
wheel  
When the green dark forest was too silent to be real

But time has no beginnings and history has no bounds  
As to this verdant country they came from all around  
They sailed upon her waterways and they walked the  
forests tall  
Built the mines, the mills and the factories for the good  
of us all

And when the young man's fancy are turnin' to the  
spring  
Then the railroad men grew restless for to hear the  
hammers ring  
But their minds were overflowing with the visions of  
their day  
Were for many a fortune the won and lost and many a  
debt to pay

For they looked in the future and what did they see  
They saw an iron road runnin' from the sea to the sea  
Bringin' the goods to a young growin' land  
All up from the seaports and into their hands

But look away said they across this mighty land  
From the eastern shore to the western strand

Bring in the workers and bring up the rails  
We gotta lay down the tracks and tear up the trails  
Open their heart let the life blood flow  
Gotta get on our way 'cause we're movin' too slow

Bring in the workers and bring up the rails  
We're gonna lay down the tracks and tear up the trails  
Open their heart let the life blood flow  
Gotta get on our way 'cause we're movin' too slow  
Get on our way 'cause we're movin' too slow

Behind the blue rockies the sun is declinin'  
The stars they come stealin' at the close of the day  
Across the wide prairie our loved ones lie sleeping  
Beyond the dark oceans in a place far away

We are the navies who work upon the railway  
Swingin' our hammers in the bright blazin' sun  
Livin' on stew and drinkin' bad whiskey  
Bendin' our old backs till the long days are done

We are the navies who work upon the railway  
Swingin' our hammers in the bright blazin' sun  
Layin' down track and buildin' the bridges  
Bendin' our old backs till the railroad is done

So over the mountains and over the plains  
Into the muskeg and into the rain  
Up the St. Lawrence all the way to Gaspé  
Just swingin' our hammers and drawin' our pay

Drivin' 'em in and tyin' 'em down  
Away to the bunkhouse and into the town  
A dollar a day and a place for my head  
A drink to the livin' and a toast to the dead

Oh the song of the future has been sung  
All the battles have been won  
On the mountain tops we stand  
All the world at our command  
We have opened up the soil  
With our teardrops and our toil

For there was a time in this fair land when the railroad  
did not run  
When the wild majestic mountains stood alone against  
the sun  
Long before the white man and long before the wheel  
When the green dark forest was too silent to be real

When the green dark forest was too silent to be real  
And many are the dead men too silent to be real

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