

# Canadian Railroad Trilogy

Gordon Lightfoot

*This song is very long. If necessary, you can omit the verses in grey marked Optional.*

## Part 1 (energetic, not too fast)

**All:** 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

**OPTIONAL:** But time has no beginning and the history has no bound  
As to this verdant country they came from all around  
They sailed upon her waterways and they walked the forest tall  
Built the mines, mills and the factories for the good of us all

**All:** And when the young man's fancy was turned into the spring  
The railroad men grew restless for to hear the hammers ring  
Their minds were overflowing with the visions of their day  
And many a fortune lost and won and many a debt to pay

## Part 2 (faster)

**All:** 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 seaboards and into their hands

**OPTIONAL:** Look away sad days  
Across this mighty land  
From the eastern shore  
To the western strand

**OPTIONAL:** Bring in the workers and bring up the rails  
We got to lay down the track and tear up the trails  
Open your heart, let the life blood flow  
We got to get on our way 'cause we're movin' too slow

**All:** Bring in the workers and bring up the rails  
We're gonna lay down the tracks and tear up the trails  
Open your heart, let the life blood flow  
We got to get on our way 'cause we're movin' too slow  
Get on our way 'cause we're movin' too slow

### **Part 3 (slow, ballad style)**

**All:** Behind the blue Rockies the sun is declinin'  
The stars they come stealin' at the close of the day  
Across the wide prairies our loved ones lie sleeping  
Beyond the dark ocean in a place far away

**OPTIONAL:** We are the navvies who work upon the railway  
Swingin' our hammers in the bright blazin' sun  
Livin' on stew and drinkin' bad whiskey  
Bendin' our backs 'til the long days are done

**All:** We are the navvies who work upon the railway  
Swingin' our hammers in the bright blazin' sun  
Layin' down track and buildin' the bridges  
Bendin' our backs 'til the railroad is done

### **Part 4 (faster, like Part 2)**

**All:** So over the mountains and over the plains  
Into the Muskage and into the rain  
Up to St. Lawrence on the way to Gaspé  
Swingin' our hammers and drawin' our pay

**All:** Layin' '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', a toast to the dead

### **Part 5 (same energy)**

**All:** Oh, the song of the future has been sung  
All the battles have been won  
On the mountaintops we stand  
All the world at our command  
We have opened up this soil  
With our teardrops and our toil

### **Part 6 (energetic but not too fast, like Part 1)**

**All:** Oh, 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 — — —