

# Canadian Railroad Trilogy

(By Gordon Lightfoot) - Part 1 is in 4/4 time

**F** **Bb** **F**  
There was a time in this fair land when the railroad did not run;

**F** **Dm** **Gm** **C7**  
When the wild majestic mountains stood alone against the sun.

**F** **Bb** **F**  
Long before the white man, and long before the wheel;

**F** **Cm** **Eb** **F** **Cm-Eb-F**  
When the green dark forest was too silent to be real.

**F** **Bb** **F**  
But time has no beginnings, and history has no bound,

**F** **Dm** **Gm** **C7**  
As to this verdant country, they came from all around.

**F** **Bb** **F**  
They sailed upon her waterways, and they walked the forests tall.

**F** **Cm** **Eb** **F** **Cm-Eb-F**  
Built the mines the mills and the factories for the good of us all.

**F** **Bb** **F**  
And when the young man's fancy was turnin' in the spring,

**F** **Dm** **Gm** **C7**  
The railroad men grew restless for to hear the hammers ring.

**F** **Bb** **F**  
Their minds were overflowing with the visions of their day,

**F** **Cm** **Eb** **F** **Cm-Eb-F (switch to 2/4 time)**  
And many a fortune won and lost and many a debt to pay.

**F** **C7** **Gm**  
For they looked in the future, and what did they see?

**Eb** **F**  
They saw an iron road runnin' from the sea to the sea.

**C7** **Gm**  
Bringin' the goods to a young growin' land,

**Eb** **F**  
All up through the seaports and into their hands.

**Cm** **Bb** **F** **Gm** **C7** **F**  
"Look away," said they, "Across this mighty land.

**F** **Cm** **F** **Gm** **C7** **F**  
From the eastern shore to the western strand."

**F** **C7** **Gm**  
Bring in the workers and bring up the rails.

**Eb** **F**  
We gotta lay down the tracks and tear up the trails.

**C7** **Gm**  
Open your heart, let the life blood flow.

**Eb** **F**  
Gotta get on our way, 'cause we're movin' too slow.

**C7** **Gm**  
Bring in the workers and bring up the rails.

**Eb** **F**  
We're gonna lay down the tracks and tear up the trails.

**C7** **Gm**  
Open your heart; let the life blood flow.

**Eb** **F**  
Gotta get on our way. 'cause we're movin' too slow.

**Gm** **C7**  
Get on our way, 'cause we're movin' too slow... *(slow down, switch to 6/8 time)*

**C7 F F7 Bb C7**  
 Behind the blue Rockies, the sun is declinin'.  
**F Dm G7 C7**  
 The stars, they come stealin' at the close of the day.  
**F F7 Bb C7**  
 Across the wide prairie, our loved ones lie sleeping.  
**F Dm Gm C7 F**  
 Beyond the dark oceans in a place far away.  
**F F7 Bb C7**  
 We are the navvies who work upon the railway.  
**F Dm G7 C7**  
 Swingin' our hammers in the bright blazin' sun.  
**F F7 Bb C7**  
 Livin' on stew and drinkin' bad whiskey.  
**F Dm Gm C7 F**  
 Bendin' our old backs 'til the long days are done.  
**F F7 Bb C7**  
 We are the navvies who work upon the railway.  
**F Dm G7 C7**  
 Swingin' our hammers in the bright blazin' sun.  
**F F7 Bb C7**  
 Layin' down track, and buildin' the bridges.  
**F Dm Gm C7 F Cm-Eb-F**  
 Bendin' our old backs 'til the railroad is done. *(switch to 2/4 time)*

**F C7 Gm**  
 So, over the mountains, and over the plains,  
**Eb F**  
 Into the muskeg, and into the rain.  
**C7 Gm**  
 Up the St. Lawrence, all the way to Gaspe,  
**Eb F**  
 Swingin' our hammers and drawin' our pay.  
**C7 Gm**  
 Drivin' 'em in, and tyin' 'em down,  
**Eb F**  
 Away to the bunkhouse and into the town.  
**C7 Gm**  
 A dollar a day, and a place for my head.  
**Eb C7**  
 A drink to the livin', a toast to the dead... *(switch to 4/4 time)*

**C7 F Eb Cm F Eb Cm F**  
 Oh, the song of the future has been sung; all the battles have been won.  
**F Cm F Cm F**  
 On the mountaintops, we stand; all the world, at our command.  
**F Eb Cm F Eb Gm C7**  
 We have opened up the soil, with our teardrops... and our toil...  
**F Bb F**  
 For there was a time in this fair land when the railroad did not run.  
**F Dm Gm C7**  
 When the wild majestic mountains stood alone against the sun.  
**F Bb F**  
 Long before the white man and long before the wheel,  
**F Cm Eb F**  
 When the green dark forest was too silent to be real...  
**F Cm Eb F**  
 When the green dark forest was too silent to be real...

**F C7 Eb F Cm-Eb-F**  
 And many are the dead men... too silent... to be real.