

[Page 38 - Cooke's Camp: A Letter and a Song](#)ISSUE : [Issue 21](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1978/12/1

AL6X OEirnpDGII CONTINUED FROM INSIDE FRONT COVER ODOke's  
Camp-Trans-Canada Highway We packed up our grips, boys, And hit for the road.  
We landed at Cooke's Camp, Now that's our abode. There we both got acquainted,  
Many friends did we meet, As we sat by the fireside To thaw out our feet. We both  
got a bunk Where we soon lay asleep. 'Twas cold as the devil For the blankets were  
cheap. In the morning the bull cook Came in with a yell Saying, Roll out boys, roll  
out. You'll soon hear the bell. We jumped from our blankets And ran to the brook To  
wash in ice water Which pleased Mr. Cooke. Then we dashed to the cookhouse Our  
breakfast to eat. On the board there was plenty of cold beans and meat. Then the  
foremen would gather Their gangs and we'd go To the cuts smd the culverts, All  
covered with snow. There he'd pass out a rainbow And then a banjo. Then he'd  
stand there behind us And watch every blow. Then the walker come rovind With a  
snarl on his face. He sure looked like an ape But he didn't have the grace. We  
worked hard all day Though the boss thought it fun. But we sure would be glad  
When our day's work was done. We played cards for cigs To pass way the time,  
Then orders were given? All lights out at nine. So we stayed in the biinkhouse And  
washed our own duds. The people around here Supplied us with spuds. A dinner for  
thirty • • Twas stew every day. For the rabbits were plenty In the woods of East  
Bay. Then a voice throu' the'darkness The Eastern and Snell's Would ring bright and  
clear Supplied us with bread. With some witty story There's none of us kicking We'd  
all love to hear. Because we're well fed, oh yeah. There was Gussie and Eddie And  
Tom and the rest, But Donald was the laddie Who told them the best. The Bully  
himself Told good stories, you know. But he couldn't surpass Those of dear Dan the  
Bo. Old Cooke said he'd shut down The camp for awhile. You can wait for your  
money, He said with a smile. Two months we've been waiting Without any pay. Old  
Cooke is in hiding, He's broke, they all say. And the winter is going And still there's  
no pay. We think, he's a rotter To treat us this way. The road is unopened, It's  
covered with snow, Our pockets are empty. We've no place to go. Little Danny  
himself Says he needs nothing more. As long as he finds Some butts on the floor. So  
if you're ever hired By a man that's named Cooke, Don't trust him too highly • We  
believe he's a crook. His foremen are drivers. They shoot off their jaw. They're  
sneaky and dirty, No sand in their craw. So hurrah for the highway, Hurrah for the  
gang. The hours spent together. When this song was sang. Cooke left us deserted  
Way out in the wood. Now he's on the blacklist In our neighbourhood. • Alex L.  
Campbell To the air of; "At Senator's Cor? ner the Crowd Gathered Round" U  
AGOISON'S LABIES WEAL ITi.: Charlotte Street, Sydney i Cards for All Occiisions The  
Card Shoppe Sydney Shopping Centre "Little bjt of Paris" for reservations 539-4671  
• LUNCH: Mon. to Fri. 12 to 2 DINNER: Mon. to Sat. 6 to 9 1'Closed Sunday)  
233 Esplanade Sydney Nova Scotia Full Wine CeUar Genuine Down East Hospitality  
Keddy' Motor Im 600 King's Road, Sydney, N.S. Phone 539-11'0 • Telex 019-351?  
Open Daily: 9 a.m.-5p.m. Open year-round ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL national  
historic park I\* Parks Canada Baddeck N.S. rSkm.west of Sydney on Route 105