

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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## The Potlatch Fair

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1. I ben Swensky fallin' bucker  
And I worked in the woods about two years,  
And I go down to Vancouver  
Yust to look on the Potlatch Fair.
2. I bought me a bottle of Campbell River  
And I yumped on the boat 'bout half-past six  
Dere I meet t'ree hundred loggers  
All goin' down to get teeth fixed.
3. I come down to Vancouver  
And I look for place to eat  
Dere I meet all dem Svensky fallers  
All down on Powell Street.
4. And it's up in the High Lead yust for fun,  
And dere I meet one big fat girl  
She slapped me on the back and said,  
"How d'ye do, Nels?"
5. And I look around, feelin' so funny,  
I never see that girl before,  
But I bein' foxy say, "Hallo, Tilly!  
Will you come and have a drink?"
6. Ve had a drink of yicky yinger  
Then we start into dance and sing,  
And I tell all them Svensky fallers  
Yust to pay for the whole darn thing.
7. Then ve drink some more yin and visky,  
And I get up on a chair and I say,  
"Everybody make for yolly!  
That's the style to make her pay!"
8. And I was a-ridin' out in a nice blue vagon,  
Up to the city, Judge to see,  
The judge say, "Pay me fifty dollars, Ole,  
You've been on an awful spree."
9. So I pay the yudge the fifty dollars  
All the money that I had

For Svensky faller, no good luck  
And he's feelin' mighty bad.

10. I go down to the Skid Road  
And I hired out there  
And I yumped on the old Cowichan for T'urLOW Island  
And to hell with the Potlatch Fair!

- from the singing of Capt. Bill Hall. PJT Coll 369.

A "potlatch" is a west coast native ceremony in which prestige is gained in the band through the giving away of goods and property. The loggers' "potlatch fair" occurs when loggers who are "stakey" (carrying lots of money after a period in the bush) go down to Vancouver to have a spree, where they also give it all away.

JB

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