

# LOVE ON THE RANGE

BY NELSON C. NYE

## The Story So Far

Under the name of Streeter, "Blur" Ankrom takes a job on the Rafter T to help lovely Lee Trone. A plot is on foot to grab the ranch, and Ankrom wants to discover who is behind it. Heffle, a sheepman, jumps the water tank. When the blustering sheriff, Ratchford, tries to keep Ankrom from going after Heffle, Ankrom shoots the gun from his hand.

## Chapter 23

### Challenge

AS Ankrom spurred his buckskin toward the southwest line camp, he decided that Ratchford would waste no time before attempting to even up the score.

Well, let him try. Action was what Trone needed now to shake him from his frightening lethargy. Ankrom thought it likely that his blow to the sheriff's chin would produce all the action they could handle—not to mention the manner in which Ratchford's pistol had left his hand!

His mind turned to the line of gab the sheriff had handed out. A smoke screen, he thought skeptically. The thing was too glib and pat; it hung together much too nicely to be the truth. Yet Ankrom was not sure enough to discount the story entirely—that yarn about Claydell had not been woven from whole cloth.

Some railroad, Ankrom believed, must actually be planning to build a road from Amarillo to El Paso; this was a thing too readily verified or disproved for the sheriff to find worthwhile the risk of a lie. It was even possible, he reflected, that someone was planning to build a head of a bay whose long, slim legs seemed built for speed. Plainly Ring-Legs had notions of tailing the new foreman back to the disputed water.

upon the man in the cabin door. He was tall, lean, rawboned, with a lantern jaw and close-set eyes in a pockmarked face. A cud of tobacco bulged one cheek and a tangle of grayish hair hung down across a corrugated forehead whose most prominent feature was the knife-scar that ran slantwise above one eye.

Ankrom's voice broke the quiet. "Who's roddin' this crew?"

"The man in the doorway shifted the rifle cocked in his arm. 'Me,' he said, and spat.

"An' who are you?"

"An' who are you?"

"I'm makin' it my business," drawled Ankrom softly. "What are you doin' on the Rafter T?"

The man's eyes showed a rush of temper. "I'm drivin' posts an' stringin' wire—an' I'm not on the blasted Rafter! Anyone'd think that outfit owned the earth to hear 'em talk!"

"They own this cabin an' water-hole," Ankrom said, "an' they're givin' you just three minutes to make your own escape. An' them that haven't left when that time is up will be carried off later—feet first!"

When Ankrom, heading for the corral, ignored Lee's call, her face went white. One hand clenched the quirt that was looped to her wrist. It almost seemed as though she was of a mind to use it as she took two swift steps after the new man's retreating figure. But she stopped abruptly.

With an unfathomable light in her eyes she stood abstractedly beside Tom Ratchford and her father. Idly she watched Ring-Legs follow Ankrom to the pole corral, shake out his rope and send it loop snaking across the head of a bay whose long, slim legs seemed built for speed. Plainly Ring-Legs had notions of tailing the new foreman back to the disputed water.

"You'd Be Surprised" WHEN Ankrom sent his buckskin out across the yard and into the trail leading to the valley's rim, Lee beckoned to Ring-Legs.

Reluctantly the puncher turned his mount in her direction. When he stopped the bay beside her, Lee said:

"Just leave him here, Ring-Legs. Thanks for saddling him."

"Huh?" the puncher's jaw dropped open. "Mind ridin' that trail again, ma'am?"

"I said you can leave the bay here—get out of the saddle."

"I was figgerin' on followin' Streeter," he began, but she stopped him with a gesture.

"Then you'll have to saddle another horse. I'm in a hurry an' this one's handy."

"But, ma'am," Ring-Legs protested, red of face, "you can't ride in them duds!"

Lee glanced down at her light blue frock.

"Can't I? You'd be surprised at what I can do once my mind's made up. Get down, now; I want this horse."

Ring-Legs dismounted. The next moment Lee was in the saddle, and off after Streeter. When she reached the crest of Eagle Point, she saw that he was standing before the cabin and that a line of men were facing him. He seemed to be talking to a man who lounged in the doorway, a rifle held in the crook of an arm, but she could not catch his words. Cautiously, she urged the bay into the trail leading down the slope. If she was seen, the men gave no evidence of the fact; their expressionless eyes seemed glued to Streeter's face. He couldn't see her for his back was turned toward her. Drawing near, she kneeed the bay to one side of the clearing before the cabin, to a place where she could see all faces and easily hear any spoken words. As she settled herself to watch, she heard Streeter's voice cross the silence restlessly.

"I'm givin' you just three minutes to make yourselves scarce." Silence fell again about the cabin. Heffle's eyes took on a burning glitter. He spat abruptly; said: "Who the hell might you be?"

"Pears to me you're mighty free with your orders."

"I'm Streeter—foreman of the Rafter T."

"Yeah? When'd Mose Hackett quit?"

"He didn't quit—he had his lamp blown out. I'm some surprised your boss ain't put you wise."

"Dead! Mose Hackett? Heffle's angular jaw sagged in amazement. It closed swiftly with a harsh snap.

"What'd ye mean by boss?"

"I was referin' to the gent that gives you orders—like the order you got to jump this camp."

"Orders? Hell, no man gives me orders, mister—you included. I do just as I please, an' when I damn well feel like it better start feelin' like clearin' out." Ankrom's drawl was soft and wicked. "Cause you've only got two minutes left if you're aimin' to leave under your own steam."

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Powdermoke, tomorrow.

# STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.



60-To-1 Victor Successfully fighting off 60 German attack planes, Lt. Colonel William George Barker, Canadian flying ace, brought his ship back from over the German lines after one of the most one-sided and spectacular aerial dog fights in aviation history. The event took place on October 27, 1918, over the Western front. Barker had been scouting over German territory and was returning to his base when the sky above him darkened with German airplanes.

Dividing and slanting at him, the Germans ripped Barker's ship from propeller to tail with machine gun bullets. Disregarding the odds, Barker fought desperately to bring his ship through.

Three times he lost consciousness from loss of blood—he had been struck by several slugs—but each time managed to recover his plane from spinning to earth.

Both legs were temporarily paralyzed from bullet wounds and one arm hung helplessly at his side. Yet, strange as it seems, Barker shot down four German planes, shook off the rest and escaped over British lines. In landing, his plane was wrecked, but he escaped alive.

Barker was awarded the coveted Victoria Cross for this amazing feat, and finished the World war with honors. He shot down 30 enemy planes and nine balloons.

While other World War flyers have been credited with a greater number of planes shot down, Barker's story is outstanding for the fact that he entered a fight with odds against him of 60-1, yet merged a winner.

Fish Ducks Dog. WOODSTOCK, Ont. — (UP) — Ontario carp can compete with the muskellunge, northern pike, tuna and tarpon for fight and drive. At least two Woodstock boys believe so. They caught a carp, struck it on the head, and then tied the fish to their dogs leash. The carp revived, struggled back into the water, and pulled the dog with it.

Air mail service between New York and California was established in 1929.

## The Grange

Lake Creek Grange met in regular session August 12 with much better attendance than usual and also a number of visitors. Mr. Patterson, state fire insurance agent, favored the assembly with an interesting and instructive address. Mr. and Mrs. Al Floyd and Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Brockway, all of Jacksonville Grange, were also welcome guests. Mrs. Floyd is Pomona lecturer.

Program for the evening was of recreational nature and much enjoyed, members being grateful to Mrs. Floyd for her contribution of various stunts and games.

September 18 was definitely decided on as date for the dinner and 4-H club and community exhibits to be held at the Grange hall. Much interest is being shown in the affair, and even a larger attendance than that of last year is expected.

## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Skeeter Arrives!



## BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—War to the Finish!



## THE NEBBS—Back in Stock

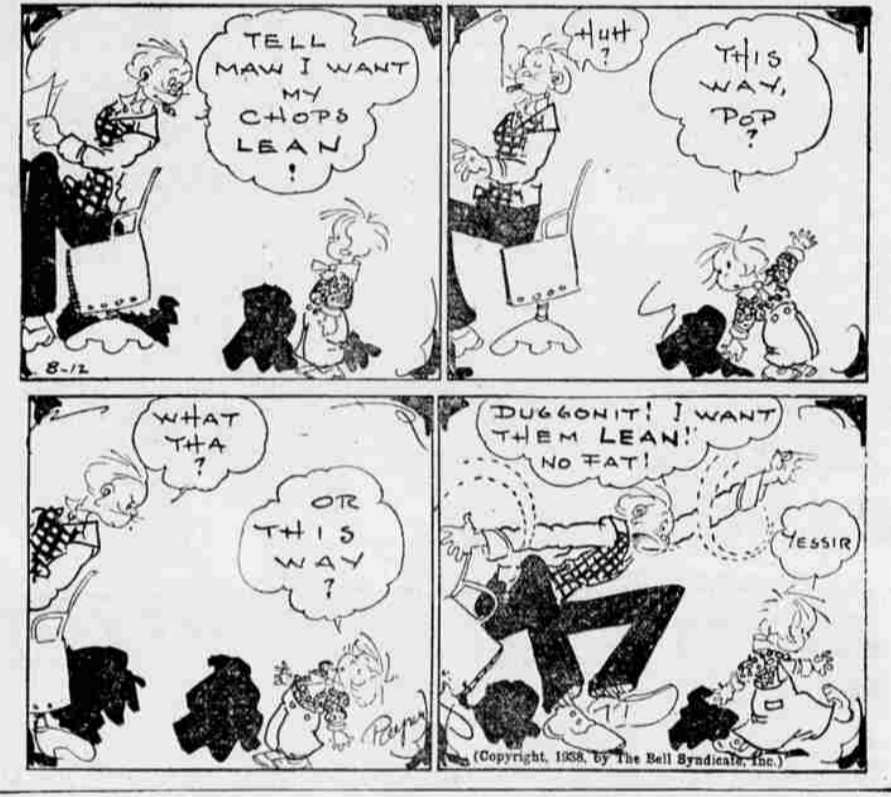


# EXECUTIVE



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# SMATTER POI



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# By HAL FORRE

## TRUCK RATE REVISION URGED IN CALIFORNIA TO CONTROL WELFARE

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 19. — (AP) — The California railroad commission made public today a proposed report of two examiners, suggesting a large number of downward revisions in highway freight rates and pointing to "advantages" of "uniform rates for both northern and southern California."

The report was issued by the commission by Examiners Howard G. Press and William H. Gorman after 17 days of hearings. The commission, in making public the findings, asked shippers and carriers to file exceptions or criticisms by September 12, and set October 6 as the date for oral arguments.

The proposed order, if finally adopted by the commission, would supercede rates and rules in 13 orders heretofore issued and would provide a uniform truck rate schedule for a differential but retained the differential in favor of coastwise vessels.

Hot on the Roof. PENN YAN, N. Y., Aug. 19. — (AP) — It was hot on the tin roof which Charles Schultz was repairing, he got a thermometer to find out just how hot it was. It broke at 120 degrees. Schultz says.

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## It was pointed out the report contemplates the third step taken by the commission to regulate truck rates to end an era of "destructive rate cutting" and "unprecedented and intense competition between truck carriers and the railroads."

(The first two steps comprised the establishment of minimum rates, rules and regulations for the highway transportation of less than carload lots for northern and southern California.)

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