

NUGGETS OF BOULDER COLOR

By Elton Garrett

When that gang of six swing shift high scalers got working on that monster slab of rock last night, visions of collecting that pool taken up by Jack Grady entered the minds of all.

No, they did not discuss the possibilities of squashing a truck driver below with this many-ton boulder—for that would be indelicate indeed.

And never was a high scaler who would stoop to indelicacy. All must be kept on a high plane with them, except the rocks they bar off the cliff.

It was on the Nevada abutment (keyway) that the six men were working. High up on the side of the cliff rested this big boulder—which was nearly as big as a goodly percentage of a room!

Now some time ago came the story to the light of how the high scalers paid over 25 cents a week, a large share of them, to Grady, this pool to be turned over in toto to the high scaler who barred off the rock that killed the first truck driver in the canyon below. For, "those

son-uz-a-guns try to run over us every time they catch us walking around out on dry lnad." This was the theory of the "pot."

No, they did not audibly plan to bar off this room-sized boulder at a time; for, as was before mentioned THAT would be indelicate. But every one of the six watched the canyon below. Experience had taught them just how far a truck could travel while a rock was going down the face of the cliff.

Each man separately did much calculating, possibly believing himself to be the only one of the six who was watching the canyon bottom.

Uh-Oh! There was a keen little Ford pickup, wending its way along the canyon. Would be there in three minutes! The scalers pried feverishly. Each tried to be in position to give the boulder the last toppling push. There were too many last pushes. Last push after last push melted away as another last push was made by another of the half dozen.

One man was confident HIS was

IT, but there came that guy "Tussy" Ropolo, who reached down over the cliff with his bar after the boulder was already dropping, and gave it a final shove. His was the last in this silent drama—this battle of wits and brawn.

Down the Nevada abutment bounded the room-sized rock, as the tiny pickup below moved toward the rock's destination. They approached the same point at the same rate of speed! Success? All agog and eyes bulging the scalers watched.

The truck threatened to beat the rock past the scheduled point of contact, but the rock on its last bound picked up speed, from the point of view of the scalers, and rushed the pickup broadside in the rear, crashing into the right rear wheel and pushing the pickup's rear five or six feet out of the road. The man in the rear end of the pickup jumped ten feet into the air, but landed in the car again, and the car continued on its way. Undamaged, but what a close approach to a collection of that pool!