

The staple camp food was beans which were imported by a Mexican named José Vasquez, living some two hundred miles south. Vasquez had a plantation which he turned into a prodigious bean farm when the establishment of the camp afforded a market. Shipments of beans arrived daily at the camp.

After reflecting on Vasquez and his beans, Martin was suddenly inspired with a new idea. He caused a meeting to be held, which he addressed as follows:

“Ladies and Gentlemen: Wholly patriotic and lofty motives impel me to summon you on the eve of the tax levy, to point out a public peril and indicate an avenue of escape. It is necessary to levy the taxes. One of the sources of revenue will be the shovel, the cornerstone of wealth in our community.

“Naturally, it would depreciate the value of the shovel to burden it with excessive taxation. This would be unjust to our citizens who have invested in shovels. It would be harmful to those who have purchased shovels which they are now holding for a suitable market. It would devastate the widow and the orphan whose funds are represented by shovels. It would discourage capitalists who would refuse to finance workmen with sums necessary to obtain shovels with which to work. This would do irreparable injury to labor.

“I believe all this is unnecessary, and I shall point out a way to shift some of the tax load from shovels and thus escape this disaster.