

identified dead, 238 missing or unidentified dead, and 106 injured. Many were literally sandblasted to death, with clothing and skin rasped from their bodies.

Few records were kept of the sociological impact of the 1930s on the nation's young men. Many had never been beyond the borders of their state, and others had not even left home. Yet, many would never return. They would choose to remain in towns and villages near their maps. They married, raised families and put down their roots, much as had other young men in the migratory movements of past years. Those who did return, many with brides, came back as successful products of an experiment in living that had renewed and stored their confidence in themselves and in their country.

The Civilian Conservation Corps approached maturity in 1937. Hundreds of enrollees had passed through the system and returned home to boast of their experiences, while hundreds more demonstrated their satisfaction by extending their enlistments. Life in the camps had settled down to almost a routine, with work the order of the day, every day, except Sunday. But, after the evening meal the camps came to life as well over a hundred men relaxed and had fun. One building in every camp was a combined dayroom, recreation center and canteen, or PX. In this building, amid the din of Ping-Pong, poker, innumerable bottles of "coke", and occasional beers, were fostered friendships that exist to this day. This, then, was the Civilian Conservation Corps that FDR tried to make permanent in April, 1937.

There were many reasons why Congress refused to establish the Corps as a permanent agency. At the time, most of them were probably valid. But never were disenchantment, or failure to recognize the success of the organization, a topic of debate. To the contrary, in a vote of confidence, Congress extended its life as an independent, funded agency for an additional two years. Conceivably Congress still regarded the CCC as a temporary relief organization with an uncertain future, rather than as a bold, progressive solution to the continuing problem of dissipation of our national resources. Whatever the reason, this stunning contradiction was a personal defeat for the President and a punitive restatement of congressional independence.

Since his appointment during the hectic days of 1933, Fechner had been able to control the operation of the CCC with but relatively minor challenges to his authority. However, 1939 would bring about a major challenge at a time when he was struggling with internal problems brought about by changing conditions both in the United States and Europe. The storm clouds forming over England and France had already impacted upon the economy of the United States with the result that, as jobs became more plentiful, applications for the CCC declined. But, again it was a sudden change in administration policy that generated the most heat for Fechner and the Civilian Conservation