

Corps.

One of Roosevelt's long-range plans was the reorganization of the administrative functions of some federal agencies. Congress had been reluctant to approve such a move until early in 1939. After much debate, they finally authorized a modified proposal. The Federal Security Agency (FSA) was created to consolidate several offices, service and boards under one Director. The CCC lost its status as an independent agency and was brought into the new organization. Fechner was furious, especially when he learned the Director, FSA, would have authority over him. Appeals to the President were futile as PDR believed the consolidation was desirable. In an angry protest, Fechner submitted his resignation. He withdrew it later, probably at FDR's request. This may have been a mistake as Fechner had been in poor health for some time. Early in December, he was stricken by a massive heart attack and died a few weeks later on New Year's Eve.

The Civilian Conservation Corps began a year of change in 1940. The death of Fechner was a severe blow coming at a time when the war in Europe was emerging as the subject of greatest concern to Roosevelt and the Congress. John T. McEntee, appointed by the President to carry on as a Director, was as knowledgeable as Fechner, having been his assistant since the beginning. He was an entirely different personality without the conciliatory talents of his predecessor, and none of his patience. His appointment, strongly opposed by Harold Ickes, another short-tempered individual, increased the friction between the Department of Interior and Director's office and was typical of the problems McEntee inherited and would generate. He served in a different, uncertain atmosphere and received faint praise for his efforts.

The Corps itself continued to be popular. Another election year attempt by the President to reduce its strength precipitated a reaction reminiscent of the congressional revolt of 1936. Despite the well-meaning attempt at economy, Congress, with an eye to the folks back home, added \$50 million to the CCC's 1940-41 appropriation and the Corps remained at its current strength of about 300,000 enrollees. Congress would never again be as generous. Other major problems were developing within Congress, most related to the defense of the country, and, inevitably, with each crisis, the priority and prestige of the CCC suffered. Those congressmen who had opposed FDR and all of his "New Deal" from the beginning, gained strength, some even calling for termination of the Corps.

By late summer, 1941, it was obvious the Corps was in serious trouble. Lack of applicants, desertion and the number of enrollees leaving for jobs had reduced the Corps to fewer than 200,000 men in about 900 camps. There were also disturbing signs that public opinion had been slowly changing. Major newspapers that had long defended and supported the Corps were now questioning the necessity of retaining the CCC when unemployment had practically disappeared. Most agreed