

ROOSEVELT BECOMES A PROGRESSIVE LEADER

Directions: Read the two articles about Roosevelt and answer the questions which follow.

Roosevelt the Progressive

Theodore Roosevelt, a Harvard graduate and Conservationist, was viewed as the most important representative of Progressivism. He came to people's attention at the time of the Spanish-American War. His courageous charge up San Juan Hill during that war made him a hero.

Roosevelt was elected Republican governor of New York, partly through the efforts of Senator Thomas C. Platt. Platt was the Republican boss of New York State who thought that Roosevelt could help his business interests. However, Roosevelt had no intention of serving Platt's interests. He attacked the ties between business and government and refused to appoint Platt's choice for state insurance commissioner. To get Roosevelt out of the governorship, the Republican party nominated him as Vice-President to run with William McKinley. The VP was considered a dead end job; but when McKinley was assassinated in 1901, Roosevelt became President.

Roosevelt was an active and strong President. He believed that the Federal Government should become involved when states were unable to deal with problems. He also believed the President should help shape legislative policy. Roosevelt promised farmers, workers, and small business people a "square deal."

When a 1902 coal strike could not be resolved, Roosevelt appointed a commission to make recommendations for settling the strike. For the first time, the federal government intervened in a strike in order to protect the public welfare.

Roosevelt worked to curb trusts when they became harmful to the public interest. Through the Sherman Anti-trust Act, he attacked such trusts as the Northern Securities Company, which had a monopoly on Western railroads. In total, forty-four anti-trust suits were filed during Roosevelt's Administration.

To give everyone a "square deal," Roosevelt urged Congress to pass the following acts:

- Elkins Act, 1903: Make rebates to railroad officials and shippers illegal.
- Hepburn Act, 1906: Give the Interstate Commerce Commission the power to set maximum railroad rates. Instruct railroads to use uniform methods of accounting.
- Meat Inspection Act, 1906: Have the Federal Government inspect meats.
- Pure Food and Drug Act, 1906: List the contents of cans and of packages on the label.

Roosevelt also withdrew more than 148 million acres of forest land from public sale. Another 84 million acres were designated for the US Geological Survey to explore for mineral and water resources. He established wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, and national monuments. The Newlands Reclamation Act set aside money to build the Roosevelt Dam in Arizona and the Shoshone Dam in Wyoming. Both projects provided irrigation for desert crops.

Roosevelt Explains the Square Deal

President Roosevelt said often that he wanted a "square deal" for labor, business, and the public. If business did not keep the public good in mind, then the government would act to protect the people. The average citizen had a champion in the White House.

On many occasions, Roosevelt stated his political objective. Examine what he says in the following speech:

"The destruction of special privilege is one of the chief factors in progress...

When we achieve it, equality of opportunity for all citizens will have two great results. First, every man will have a fair chance to reach the highest point to which his capacities can carry him, unassisted by special privilege and unrestricted by special privileges of others. Second, the society will get from every citizen the highest service he is able to contribute.

I stand for the square deal. When I say that I am for the square deal, however, I do not mean merely that I stand for fair play under the present rules of the game. I stand for having those rules changed to work for greater equality of opportunity and reward. This philosophy means that our national and state governments must be freed from the sinister influence or control of special interests...

The absence of effective state and national controls over unfair money-getting has tended to create a small class of enormously wealthy and economically powerful men whose chief object is to hold and increase their power... I think we must face the fact that such an increase in governmental control is now necessary...

Let us also concede that government has the right to regulate these conditions of labor in the interest of the common good... We need comprehensive workmen's compensation acts, both state and national laws to regulate child labor and the work of women, and practical training for daily life and work to supplement book-learning in public schools."

QUESTIONS

1) Complete the following chart:

<i>Area</i>	<i>What Roosevelt Did</i>
Business	
Policy-Making	
Strike Mediation	
Trusts	
Transportation	
Health	
Conservation	

1) What did Roosevelt mean by a “square deal”?

2) What group did Roosevelt want the government to control more effectively? Why?

3) What two results did Roosevelt believe equal opportunity would provide?

4) Assume the role of either a big businessman or a working class citizen. Write a response to Roosevelt’s speech. Your response should include whether or not you are in favor of the square deal and why. It should also include any changes or suggestions for improvement you believe are important. **This should be at least a paragraph long!**