

Great Depression and New Deal: What is the responsibility of government?

A. United States Unemployment, 1929-1933

Year	# unemployed	% unemployed
1929	1,550,000	3.2%
1930	4,340,000	8.7%
1931	8,020,000	15.9%
1932	12,080,000	23.6%
1933	12,830,000	24.9%

B. President Hoover Describes the Role of Government

"The American system is founded upon the conception that only through ordered liberty, freedom and equal opportunity to the individual will his initiative and enterprise spur on the march of progress. . . The Republican Party restored the government to its position as an umpire instead of a player in the economic game. . . For these reasons the American people have gone forward in progress while the rest of the world halted."

C. Franklin D. Roosevelt Supports Active Government

"I shall ask the Congress for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis -- broad executive power to wage a war against the enemy -- as great as the power that would be given me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe. . . The country needs and demands bold experimentation. It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails admit it firmly and try another. But above all try something."

D. Prices: Then and Now

	Then	Now
Women's Clothes		
Winter Coat	\$28.00	
Sweater	\$1.00	
Men's Clothes		
Dress Shirt	\$1.00	
Overcoat	\$18.50	
Toys		
Action Toy	3 for 59 cents	
Doll	\$1.95	
Household Items		
Sewing Machine	\$23.95	
Washing Machine	\$33.50	

E. Hourly Wages: Then and Now

Job Category	Hourly Wages, Then	Hourly Wages, Now
Manufacturing Worker	42 cents	\$12.50
Cook	37 cents	\$5.90
Doctor	\$1.53	\$45.00
Accountant	\$1.12	\$17.50

F. 2,500,000 Veterans Sign Bonus Petition

The New York Times, March 26, 1932

2,500,000 ex-service men (World War I veterans) have asked that their adjusted service certificates be paid immediately. This plea will go before Speaker Garner and the House in two weeks. The service men are calling their group, The Disabled American Veterans, The First Reserve Association and other names. The veterans are happy that the bill is gaining sentiment throughout the country.

Republicans in both the House and the Senate have said that if the bill gets to the floor, "Nothing on earth can stop its' passage." New York Representative Bacon is worried about the bill. "It will simply double the deficit. It is simply another crazy democratic plan!" It was stated by many representatives that this battle between democrats and republicans on the bill issue will probably drag on into the presidential elections, and possibly beyond.

Questions:

1. Why do you think that ex-service men are asking for this money?
2. What is the position of Long Island Congressional Representative Bacon on this issue?
3. Why do many people feel this debate between will continue during the presidential election?
4. In your opinion, should the World War I veterans receive their bonuses.? Why?

G. Roosevelt Charges Federal Neglect Of "Little Fellow"

The New York Times, April 8, 1932

Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt, in a radio speech, said that, "The little fellow had been beyond the range of vision of the Hoover Administration." The Governor made this speech to asked American people to think about what the President was really doing to lift the country out of its' depression.

Roosevelt said that this crisis was "more grave" to the nation than entering the Great War in 1917. Comparing Hoover to Napoleon on how both treated the "little people," Roosevelt said that Washington, "has either forgotten or does not want to remember the infantry of our economy army." Roosevelt ended his speech by saying that depression relief must go to the "forgotten man" on the bottom of the economic pyramid first and then other problems can then be solved.

Questions:

1. Who are the "little fellow" and the "forgotten man"?
2. How does Governor Roosevelt challenge President Hoover in this speech?
3. Do you agree with Governor Roosevelt? Why or why not?

Parade To Capitol In Plea For Bonus

The New York Times, April 9, 1932

More than 1,200 veterans marched to the capitol steps yesterday in a demonstration to Congress for passage of a \$2,600,000,000 bonus bill. The veterans were armed with petitions filled with 10-600 names each. The petitions supposedly included some 2,240,000 names including 199,904 names from New York State. The mass meeting was orderly, and the 500 policemen called in were not needed. Representative Rainey, head of the House Ways and Means Committee, accepted the petitions with "great pleasure".

Questions:

1. Why did the veterans march to the capitol building in Washington DC?
2. In your opinion, why does the New York Times article say that "The petitions supposedly included some 2,240,000 names"?

Weary Bonus Army Reaches Capitol By Truck

The New York Times, May 30, 1932

With American flags with them, sixteen truckloads of war veterans arrived at the capitol vowing to remain in Washington until Congress pays them their bonuses in full. Weary, hungry, and dirty from their trek, the former soldiers had hitchhiked to the capital. They were not given trucks until they got to Maryland. Many had hitchhiked, including 330 from the Pacific Coast, and they were surprised to find food and coffee waiting for them. There was no shouting or demonstrations as the soldiers went to buildings where they will be allowed to sleep. It is estimated that as many as 3,200 veterans are in these buildings waiting for Congress to pay their bonuses.

Questions:

1. Why are veterans camping out at the Capitol building in Washington DC?
2. In your opinion, why are the veterans displaying the American flag?

Veterans Here Off To Capitol As House Forces A Bonus Vote

The New York Times, June 5, 1932

500 Veterans from New York began their march to the capitol to demand their bonuses, but were forced to stop in Elizabeth, New Jersey when their plea for a free train ride was rejected. Police have said that they believe some of the marchers from New York might be Communists. Some of the marchers had started the march from Union Square in New York City under the auspices of the Workers' Ex-Service Men's League, an organization believed to have Communist leanings. Other marchers, believed to be "American", were from Brooklyn, and met up with the alleged Communists along the way. While both groups claimed that they were all good Americans, the group from Brooklyn went on to say, "We are going to Washington to demand our bonus. We don't want to have anything to do with the 'other' fellows."

Questions:

1. Why are the New York veterans having difficulty getting to Washington, DC?
2. Why are the police suspicious of some of the New York marchers?
3. In your opinion, does it make a difference if some of the marchers believe in communism? Explain your views?

City Bonus Hikers To Get Fare Home

The New York Times, June 11, 1932

Governor Roosevelt has said he will provide railroad transportation out of the "bonus army" camp for bona fide residents of New York City stranded in the capital. A \$1,000 donation was given anonymously to help veterans of New York City return home. Roosevelt said this and other donations will help 800 New Yorkers come home.

Questions:

1. In your opinion, why is Governor Roosevelt making this announcement?
2. Do you think the veterans will accept this offer? Why or why not?

Bonus Bill Passes In House, 209-176: Senate To Rush Vote

The New York Times, June 16, 1932

The House passed the Patman Bill yesterday, which is expected to give \$2,400,000,000 to pay the rest of the soldier's benefits. The vote was then sent to the Senate. The Bonus marchers cheered when they heard of the vote. The bonus certificates will not become due until 1945 which has angered some of the veterans. Many in the House said that they are doubtful whether the bill will pass the Senate, or be approved by President Hoover. The President has let many know that he will not approve the bill. Fifty-six Senators are reportedly backing the President's veto, which would help block the bill from passing the Senate. Those who favor the bill are hoping that the President, "will not dare" veto this measure if he hopes to win the election in November. **Activity:** Write a letter to President Hoover. Explain your views on the veteran's bonus bill.

Senate Defeats Bonus, Despite 10,000 Veterans Masses Around Capitol

The New York Times, June 18, 1932

The bonus bill to issue \$2,400,000,000 in new currency to past War veterans was defeated in the Senate last night by a vote of 62-18. Many present said it was the tensest day in Capitol history since the World War. Tensions rose as the vote was announced, and for the first time, the bonus army seemed to get out of hand. Commander-in-Chief Walters appealed to the men to return to their encampments, while others appealed for the men to rally. While the announcement of the vote first stunned the veterans into silence, they were soon yelling and were reluctant to leave the Capitol steps. Some feared that they would be told to go back home. Many of these unemployed men have no homes to go back to. The veterans began planning their next move which included bringing pressure on the Democratic National Convention to make the Bonus payment issue a major part of their campaign. Authorities are worried about the veterans staying in the capitol, and worry about violence against the Senate now that the vote is known.

Questions:

1. How did the defeat of the bonus bill affect the veterans?
2. Why do some of the veterans have uncertain feelings about returning home?
3. In your opinion, will the defeat of the bonus bill lead to violent protests? Why or why not?

Editorial: The Bonus Vote *The New York Times*, June 19, 1932

For the "Bonus army", the vote of the Senate means defeat. These men have neither work nor money, and with blind faith alone, they have thrown themselves at the mercy of Congress. They feel it is the government's duty and obligation to pay them the honest money they are due. Congress is not fulfilling their duties.

Questions:

1. Is the writer of this editorial sympathetic to the veterans?
2. In your own opinion, is the government supposed to take care of people? Explain.

Troops Drive Vets From Capitol, Fire Camps There And At Anacostia

The New York Times, July 29, 1932

As flames rose from the Anacostia flats, veterans left the area that had been their home for the past two months going they knew not where. Cavalry stood guard on the bridges leading to the camps to make sure all were leaving. The veterans were being forced to leave on behest of the military forces of the government, summoned by President Hoover himself. The President said he had to do this because confrontations had begun between bonus marchers and the police. Many of the marchers were believed to be Reds and this is what sparked the riot with police. One marcher was left dead as a result. Tear gas, guns, and fire were all employed to rid the shanty town of bonus marchers. President Hoover said this was necessary. Hoover also said that many of the marchers probably did not know that they were sharing quarters with violent Communists with criminal records.

Questions:

1. What happened to the bonus marchers?
2. According to President Hoover, why were the bonus marchers forced to leave the capitol?
3. In your opinion, did the charge of communist influence justify what happened? Explain.
4. How do you think these events will affect the presidential election? Why?

Roosevelt Puts Economic Recovery First In His Acceptance Speech

The New York Times, July 3, 1932

After serving nearly 30 years in the Senate, Speaker of the House John Nance Garner, was nominated as Democratic Candidate as Vice President of the United States. The noisy convention who for the first time were in complete agreement on Garner's nomination, cheered as the vote made it official. Garner stated that instead of splintering apart as Republicans predicted, the Democrats remained strong and by naming Franklin D. Roosevelt for President, "have chilled the heart of every Republican in the United States." The floor of the convention in Chicago erupted in cheers at this statement. More and more people are joining the Democratic camp because they feel it is the where real progressive leadership awaits them.

Many predicted that Roosevelt and Garner will lead the Democratic party to the greatest victory it has ever achieved. Roosevelt flew to Chicago to accept the nomination after Garner's speech. Many questioned why the Governor used an airplane to get to the convention. Roosevelt said he did it to, "bring forward the idea of getting the campaign started. I believe that there are votes to be made in July."

Questions:

1. Why are the Democrats enthusiastic about the nominations of Roosevelt and Garner?
2. Why did Roosevelt use an airplane to travel to the convention?
3. In your opinion, why are Americans interested in Progressive leadership?

Governor Roosevelt's Radio Speech

The New York Times, July 31, 1932

Governor Roosevelt has promised relief for the unemployed in his latest radio speech. Roosevelt said we must save in one place, what we would spend in others, or we must acquire funds through taxation. He said that a government like a family, can spend more than it earns for a year, if it will help the family, but it can not continue, otherwise we will all wind up in the poor house.

While the Republican government believes that relief and help is a local responsibility, the Democrats are keeping an eye on actual human needs. We will use human welfare, especially for the protection of our children. The Democrats would give Federal credit to the States to provide unemployment relief wherever it is needed. The States finances are so diminished that without this help, they can not provide for the needy.

Roosevelt said more jobs could be provided by a reduction in hours or labor. He also encouraged that shorter hours be required for workers each week.

Questions:

1. According to this article, what is the major difference between Democrats and Republicans?
2. How will Governor Roosevelt help the unemployed?
3. Write a letter to the editor of the New York Times explaining your views on Governor Roosevelt's radio address.

NRA BUY NOW!

The Hempstead Sentinel, September 7, 1933

If the NRA is to be a success, we must all do our part and not just paste the "Blue Eagle" slogan on our windows without further effort. The manufacturers and merchants, are doing their part. The various industries have formulated their codes or are doing so. The stores are displaying the "Blue Eagle." More people are being employed. The Government has called upon industries and merchants to do their part. The final goal of the activity is the consumer. Goods must be moved from the warehouses and shelves. If you can afford to spend at all, do not delay. By spending you will be doing your part. Buy Now!

Questions:

1. What is the Blue Eagle?
2. How are manufacturers and merchants doing their part?
3. How are consumers supposed to support the campaign?
4. In your opinion, how is this campaign supposed to help to solve the depression?