

## **The Progressives**

Problems affected the U.S. in 1900:

- a. Many people couldn't earn enough money to have decent living conditions.
- b. Many violent strikes occurred because of low wages and unsafe working conditions for most urban workers.
- c. Thousands of farmers went bankrupt or became tenant farmers.
- d. Serious crime and disease were common in crowded neighborhoods in big cities.
- e. Government at the local, state, and federal level was corrupt.

### Changes in Attitudes

#### **The depression of 1893**

The depression of 1893 changed the attitude of middle-class people about poverty because they noticed that not only people who were lazy or unfit but also middle-class people could lose their jobs.

#### **Awareness of problems**

People's awareness of the problems in America increased because:

- a. William Jennings Bryan, a Democratic candidate, made hundreds of speeches about the economic problems many people had during his election campaign of 1896.
- b. Books and magazines described the problems caused by corruption or unfair practices regularly.

Upton Sinclair's book "The Jungle" told about:

- a. The unhealthy way meat was processed and packaged.
- b. The terrible lives of the workers in Chicago meatpacking industry.
- c. How local political corruption allowed these unsafe practices to be continued.

#### **Views on changing government**

People thought that government should **not** change because they believed the government was based on Christian moral values that should always be the same.

People thought that government should change because only a small number of wealthy businessmen were controlling the lives of millions of other people.

According to Darwin's theory of evolution, some plants and animals were better able to survive changes in their environment because they made changes themselves as their environment changed.

## The Progressive Era

The years from 1900 to 1916 were called the Progressive Era because changes in people's attitudes produced gradual changes in how government helped citizens.

Two kinds of improvements made during the Progressive Era:

- a. The relief improvements to improve the standard of living for poor people.
- b. The regulation improvements to make elections more honest and fair.

Progressives believed that solving the problems needed government action.

## The Progressives

Middle-class women and well-educated, young women from wealthy families were most responsible for starting progressive improvements.

Most Progressives wanted to solve America's problems by making business practices honest and fair.

Socialism is a form of government that the farmers, workers, and government officials own or control most of the economy.

The most well-known socialist in the U.S. was Eugene Debs who formed the American Railway Union.

## **Progressives and Local Solutions**

### Local Relief

Middle-class people became concerned with the problems of poor neighborhoods because of the spread of diseases.

Some of the concerns middle-class women had for poor mothers and children:

- a. Many families couldn't afford milk for their children.
- b. Mothers who worked did not often have any place to leave their children.
- c. Women worked long hours in dangerous conditions and young children worked instead of attending school.

### **Settlement of houses**

Settlement housing offered services to help poor people's medical problems and to help find jobs, recreation, and food and clothing.

Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr started settlement houses in America.

Jane Addams received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Settlement-house workers tried to help women and children by pressuring government to start a special court for young people, to start kindergartens, vocational education classes, and special classes for immigrant children, and to build playgrounds and parks and garbage collection service in crowded neighborhoods.

### Regulation of Local Government

City governments were corrupted because politicians often took bribes from companies that did business with the city government.

Patronage system is a way to hire people for city government jobs because of their friendship with politicians not because of their ability.

### **Political bosses**

Political bosses helped immigrants and poor people to find their jobs or place to live to get votes from them in return.

### **Boss Tweed**

Boss Tweed used city government corruption to become rich by requiring all city employees to overcharge the city on all construction jobs.

### **Good government candidates**

Middle-class people became more involved in local politics by sponsoring candidates who were often called "good government" candidates.

Mayor Thomas Johnson was considered a good government candidate because he held public meetings for citizens to present their problems to government officials.

Mayor Samuel Jones was also a good candidate because he set up free kindergartens and playgrounds and made the police give up their heavy clubs for lighter sticks and stop the practice of jailing people without charging them with a crime.

### **Election reforms**

In an "at large election", candidates for city offices were elected from the city as a whole and not from just small neighborhoods.

This helped elect more good government candidates and fewer city bosses.

### **City managers**

In the city manager plan, the city council was elected by the people, but the council had to appoint a trained person to be in charge of city employees and their work. This person was called the city manager.

The city manager would hire people based on their ability to do their job rather than on their friendship with a politician, which made it more difficult to corrupt a city.

Progressives were more successful in improving government in small and middle-sized cities than in large cities because political bosses had too much support from city workers and immigrants in larger cities.

## **Progressives and State Level Solutions**

Progressives realized that many of the problems at the local level were affected by state laws, which is why they began to work at a state level.

### State Level Relief

#### **Prisons**

1913 – Thomas Mott Osborn successfully led a campaign to improve the New York prison system.

Prisoner abuse decreased and prison buildings were cleaned up. They were provided with better plumbing and ventilation

#### **Public education**

1830 – children were not required to attend school.

Progressives thought it was important for all children to have some schooling so they could get better jobs.

Progressive Era – many states began passing laws requiring children under a certain age to attend school.

At the same time laws were being passed that prevented young children from working in factories.

Between 1870 and 1910, the number of students attending public school grew from 7 million to nearly 18 million.

#### **Higher education**

Endow means to invest money and use the income from that investment to pay many of the school's expenses.

Many wealthy businessmen and railroad men endowed colleges to meet the increased need for adequate workers.

Early 1900s, colleges were no longer exclusive to just the children of the wealthy.

## State Regulations on Working Conditions

### **Child labor**

Many problems on using child labor in early 1900s:

- a. Children were paid very low wages.
- b. They often worked in very bad conditions, very dangerous and unhealthy.

From 1902-1914 most states adopted new child-labor laws:

- a. Prohibited hiring children under the age of 14 to work in factories.
- b. Prohibited children from doing dangerous work or working at night.
- c. Limited how many hours children could work.
- d. Required safety inspections if children worked in factories or mines.

These reforms didn't cover children who worked in the food-production industries, in the fields, or canning factories. So child labor remained common in the states, especially in states that had large agricultural economies.

### **Safety regulations**

Why factory inspection laws and regulations had limited effectiveness:

- a. There was not adequate money to hire enough state inspectors.
- b. Many factory owners ignored health and safety regulations

### **Other working-condition regulations**

State legislatures were often controlled by people representing the interests of big business.

In a few states, regulations were passed that restricted the number of hours adult workers were allowed to work at certain jobs.

## State Regulations for Government Fairness

State legislatures were often controlled by people representing the interests of big businesses.

### **The direct primary**

In a direct primary, the people who belong to a political party elect the local and state-level candidates for their party.

Before the direct primary was used, political bosses usually decided who would be the candidates in an election.

The direct primary increased fairness because it gave everyone a chance to vote fairly, without the influence of political bosses.

## **The initiative**

Initiative allowed ordinary people to propose legislation.

Before the initiative was allowed, only the state legislators were able to propose new laws.

The initiative increased fairness because the people have more power to propose the laws they want.

## **The referendum**

Referendum lets the people vote on whether to approve a new law.

When the legislature passes a law, the time from when the law is passed to when the law goes into effect people can ask if the new law can be voted on by the people. If 10% of the people sign the request, then a referendum is held.

The referendum increases fairness because it gives all the people a chance to vote on the law.

## **The recall**

Recall allows voters to remove politicians from office before their elected term is over.

The recall increases fairness because it allows the people to remove a politician if they believe he had been doing something illegal or has done something voters do not like.

### *Limited Effect of Government Fairness Regulations*

Political bosses limited the effectiveness of the direct primary by getting the candidate they wanted elected in the primary election by giving him all the party's money for newspaper coverage and campaign signs.

The problems that limited the referendum, recall, and initiative were:  
Progressives had difficulty getting enough people to be aware of the problems and sustaining interest until all of the signatures were gathered and the vote was taken.

## **An example of state action**

Some of the government fairness regulations enacted by La Follette and the Progressives in Wisconsin were:

- a. Got rid of corrupt politicians, who got him elected.
- b. Helped enact the direct primary, initiative, and referendum.

La Follette supported Progressives who pressured the legislature to pass laws for recalling elected officials, placing limits on how much money politicians could spend for elections, and forbidding corrupt election practices such as paying for votes.

La Follette also took the lead in making railroads and timber companies pay taxes. He passed legislation that required people who wanted state government jobs to take a test for the job.

## **Progressives and National Level Solutions**

### Political Parties

Political parties try to solve problems that are common to most people in the party. This means that many groups in a political party will not get their particular problem solved.

In 1854, Republican party was started.

The different groups who supported the Republican party after the Civil War:

- a. Wealthy and middle-class of the North and West
- b. African Americans of the South
- c. Many veterans of the Civil War

In 1792, Democratic party was started.

The different groups who supported the Democratic party after the Civil War:

- a. Poor urban workers in the North
- b. White Southerners and low-income urban workers
- c. The people who supported the Democrats were those who were rejected by the wealthy, high class of the Republicans.

### Democrats, Republicans, and Big Business

Laissez faire is a policy in which the government does not regulate how businesses operate.

Reasons why no strong federal laws or regulations were passed in the late 1800s:

- a. Big businesses did not want laws that would make them spend money to help solve the problems of the poor or that would regulate their businesses.
- b. Many people believed government shouldn't interfere in the lives of people.
- c. Federal laws were compromises between legislators from across the nation who often had different ideas about what laws should do.

The similarity between Republicans and Democrats was they both agreed that government should not try to regulate businesses.

## *The Progressive Era Under Roosevelt*

In 1898, Roosevelt became a national hero as a leader of the cavalry unit in the Spanish American War.

In 1900, he ran as the Republican Vice President with William McKinley, becoming President upon McKinley's assassination

### **Roosevelt's ideas about government**

Roosevelt decided to regulate the abuses of big business, he believed that problems caused by big business were leading more people to socialism.

### **Roosevelt's regulation of big business**

In 1902, coal miners were on strike, this was the first time President Roosevelt interfered with big business.

The owners of the coal mines closed the mines down due to the lack of workers who were on strike.

Roosevelt told the owners of the mines that if they did not reopen he would send in federal troops.

The mine owners, knowing the people needed coal and would support Roosevelt, gave in to the striking miners, reopening the mines and giving the workers a 10% raise, reducing their work day to 9 hours.

Later, Roosevelt referred to this kind of settlement as a "square deal."

Roosevelt's action marked an important turning point for the federal government, it was the first time the federal government had acted as a mediator in a labor strike.

### **Roosevelt and railroad regulation**

Roosevelt and Congress regulated the railroads by forming the Elkins Act, which made the railroads publish their rates and which fined railroads and shippers who received rebates.

### **Roosevelt and other monopoly regulation**

Roosevelt helped put an end to monopolies that hurt consumers. He either made them accommodate, or closed them down.

Different groups supported Roosevelt in the 1904 elections:

- a. Middle-class consumers – they thought he was working to regulate monopolies
- b. Big business owners – they realized that Roosevelt generally supported the growth of big business as long as workers received reasonable wages.

The Supreme Court changed during the Progressive Era:

- a. Several new justices were appointed to the Supreme court as old justices left the Court.
- b. The new justices believed that government should regulate big business abuse and supported Roosevelt.

### **Roosevelt and natural resources regulation**

Roosevelt's actions regarding natural resources:

- a. People became worried that the rapid timber cutting and mining would eventually use up these natural resources.
- b. Roosevelt added 150 million acres to the national forests and established 53 wildlife refuges.
- c. He also tried to use inspectors to make sure that timber and mining companies didn't do serious damage to the environment.

### *The Election of 1908*

Roosevelt didn't run for president in the election of 1908 because it had become a custom that no President would serve longer than the first president, George Washington.

Roosevelt picked up William Taft to run for President because he felt Taft would continue the progressive reforms. Taft was one of his cabinet members.

### *The Progressive Era Under Taft*

Taft carried on the work of Theodore Roosevelt by continuing the policy of correcting abuses while helping business grow.

Taft became unpopular with Progressives because:

- a. He was not a skilled politician, and made mistakes
- b. He opened up a million acres of protected federal land to timber and mining companies

### *The Election of 1912*

In 1910, Roosevelt returned from his 2 year visit to Africa and saw that Progressive reformers were angry with Taft.

In 1912, Roosevelt decided to run for President again because he and many of the Progressives were angry with Taft's actions.

The 4 candidates for President in 1912:

- a. Woodrow Wilson – Democratic candidate
- b. Eugene Debs – Socialist candidate
- c. William Taft – Republican candidate
- d. Theodore Roosevelt – Progressive candidate

Wilson won the election, and enough democratic congressmen were elected to give the Democrats control of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

### The Progressive Era Under Wilson

#### **Wilson and relief reforms**

In 1913, the Underwood Tariff Act was first reformed.

This act provided the first real lowering of tariffs since the Civil War, which made imported products cheaper, which helped the consumer greatly.

Income tax was included as part of the Underwood Tariff Act because when the prices of imported goods was lowered, the government received less money in taxes. To replace this money, the government collected income tax.

In 1912, The right of the federal government to collect income tax was officially approved by the passage of the 16<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

#### **Wilson and monopoly regulation**

In 1914, Wilson convinced Congress to pass the Clayton Act.

Price discrimination is charging different prices to different customers.

The Clayton Act made price discrimination illegal. Without price discrimination, businesses could not control stores with higher and lower pricing.

The Clayton Act was important for unions because it stated that labor unions could not be considered monopolies and the Sherman Antitrust Act could not be used to declare strikes illegal.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) started by Wilson in addition to the Clayton Act. The job of the FTC was to prevent unfair trade prices that reduced competition. The FTC had the power to investigate companies and order them to immediately stop any illegal practice.

Events in Europe in 1916 made it seem that America would soon be drawn to the war in Europe.

Wilson became less concerned about working with big business to get ready for the war. (1917 – the US entered the war in Europe)

## **Wilson and banking regulation**

Federal Reserve Act decreased the control New York City bankers had over interest rates and who received loans. It made credit more available all around the country by creating a national banking system. Under this new Act, the government controlled interest rates.

## **Wilson and government fairness regulation**

17<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified in 1913

This amendment established the direct election of senators. It made the government fairer because it required that senators be elected by people in the state rather than appointed by the state legislatures.

## **The Effects of the Progressive Era**

### *Limits to Big Business Regulation*

W. E. B. DuBois was an African-American college professor at Atlanta University who decided to organize to fight against discrimination.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) tried to help African-Americans by using the courts. With the help of African-American and white lawyers, they filed cases to challenge segregation and discrimination.

### **Native Americans and Mexican Americans**

Educated Native Americans formed the Society of American Indians (SAI) in 1911 to solve the problems of education, health care, and discrimination.

They had few successes in solving these problems and the association fell apart in the early 1920's. It wasn't until 1934 that the government attempted to improve the worsening conditions of Native Americans.

Mexican Americans did no better than Native Americans during the Progressive Era.

No organized groups were working to improve their standard of living or working conditions, and the federal government ignored this group.

## Examples of Democratic Process Successes

### **Prohibition**

Prohibition is the idea that the production and sale of alcoholic beverages should not be permitted

At first, those who wanted alcohol banned were middle class women who lived in rural areas. They believed drinking made men lose their jobs and leave their families, becoming violent.

1869 – the Prohibition Party was organized in many states, hoping candidates who favored prohibition were elected.

1874 – a different group formed to work just at the local and state levels. This group was called the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).

1895 – the Prohibition Party and the WCTU formed a coalition called the Anti-Saloon League. They took action at the state and federal levels.

1913 – Anti-Saloon League members pressured the federal government to forbid the shipment of alcohol to any state that had laws against the sale of alcohol.

1916 – almost 60% of the American population lived in states that prohibited the sale of alcohol.

1917 – The 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment made the sale and manufacture of alcohol illegal everywhere in the U.S.

### **Woman’s suffrage**

Suffrage is the right to vote.

When the constitution was written it said nothing about women having the right to vote. Prior to the Progressive Era, a group called the Women’s Loyalty League had worked unsuccessfully at getting suffrage for women at the national level.

After the Civil War, the Women’s Loyalty League formed the National Women Suffrage Association. It was led by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Stanton. These associations worked to pass the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments.

The National American Women’s Suffrage Association continued to pressure the federal government to pass a national law giving women the right to vote.

1912 – 9 western states had allowed women to vote in state and local elections.

1920 – after much campaigning by women, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution was ratified. It gave women the right to vote in all elections.

### **The role of women**

Between 1880 and 1900 the role of women changed greatly.

The number of women working outside the home nearly tripled.

As the need for clerical jobs increased, women began doing clerical work that had been done by men in the past.

The number of women working in offices increased from just 4% of total office workers to nearly 50%.

Women also joined unions in some industries.

The women who led the movement to gain suffrage called themselves feminists.

The increasing number of women in universities and the workplace produced leaders for a feminist movement. Ideas such as equal pay for equal work, and the opening of all professions to women were part of the feminist movement.