Chapter 6, Lesson 2

Roosevelt and Taft

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Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President
Teddy Roosevelt’s background – before he became president.

- Born into wealthy New York family
- Harvard graduate – was a boxer
- Rancher/cowboy in the Dakotas
- Governor of New York
- Assistant Secretary of Navy
- Veteran of Spanish-American War – the famous ‘Rough Riders’
Theodore Roosevelt

- In international affairs, he believed in **Social Darwinism**, only the strongest would survive.
- Domestically, a committed progressive. Believed that government should balance the needs of competing groups in American society on behalf of the public interest.
- His reform programs soon became known as the **Square Deal**.
A. Main Idea: Theodore Roosevelt increased the government’s power to limit big business and protect natural resources.

1. Detail: Roosevelt believed in the efficiency of trusts unless they created **monopolies**.
   a. TR believed some trusts were good (efficient/contributed to prosperity of the U.S.); others abused power and hurt the public interest.
   b. The Roosevelt administration filed 42 antitrust actions
First targeted **Northern Securities**, J. P. Morgan’s railroad holding company when it created a monopoly on railroad traffic in the Northwest.

Farmers and business owners feared that without railroad competition, shipping rates would rise and reduce their profits.

In 1904, the Supreme Court ruled that Morgan’s firm had violated the Sherman Antitrust Act. Roosevelt was called a “trustbuster,” and his popularity grew.
A. Main Idea: Theodore Roosevelt increased the government’s power to limit big business and protect natural resources.

2. Detail: Roosevelt intervened in the Coal Strike of 1902 to protect the country from a shortage that would have closed factories and left homes unheated.
   a. Believed that it was his job to keep society operating efficiently by helping settle conflicts between different groups and their interests
   b. Roosevelt urged the UMW and the mine owners to accept arbitration—a settlement negotiated by an outside party. The union agreed; mine owners refused, however, until Roosevelt threatened to order the army to run the mine
   c. By intervening in the dispute, he took the first step toward establishing the federal government as a broker between powerful groups in society.
A. Main Idea: Theodore Roosevelt increased the government’s power to limit big business and protect natural resources.

3. Detail: Roosevelt had Congress create the Department of Commerce and Labor to inform the public about abuses of power by big business.
   a. Companies opened their files for examination. Department of Commerce and Labor would privately tell the company about problems and allow them to fix the problems quietly.
   b. These deals gave Roosevelt the ability to regulate big business without having to sacrifice economic efficiency by breaking up the trusts.
   c. Looked out for workers
A. **Main Idea: Theodore Roosevelt increased the government’s power to limit big business and protect natural resources.**

In keeping with his belief in regulation, Roosevelt pushed the Hepburn Act through Congress in 1906.

- Strengthened the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) by giving it the power to set railroad rates and ensure profits.
- Suspicious at first, the railroads eventually realized they could work with the commission to set rates and regulations that limited competition and prevented new competitors from entering the industry.
A. Main Idea: Theodore Roosevelt increased the government’s power to limit big business and protect natural resources.

4. Detail: Two laws, the **Meat Inspection Act** and the **Pure Food and Drug Act**, were passed in 1906 to protect consumers.

   a. These laws required accurate labeling of ingredients, strict sanitary conditions and a rating system for meats
   b. It helped businesses by enlarging consumer confidence in their products.
Discuss

What were Theodore Roosevelt's beliefs about big business, and how did he act on those beliefs during the early 1900s?
B. Main Idea: To protect our natural resources, Roosevelt urged Americans to conserve them.

1. Detail: The West’s landscape changed when the Newlands Reclamation Act allowed federal money to pay for irrigation and land development.
   a. transformed the West’s landscape and economy on a large scale.
B. Main Idea: To protect our natural resources, Roosevelt urged Americans to conserve them.

2. Detail: Gifford Pinchot was appointed to head the United States Forest Service, established in 1905. He and Roosevelt felt that the best way to protect forests was to control lumbering on federal lands.

a. Roosevelt also added more than 100 million acres to the protected national forests and established five new national parks and 51 federal wildlife reservations.
B. Main Idea: To protect our natural resources, Roosevelt urged Americans to conserve them.

3. Detail: Roosevelt greatly increased the power of the **executive** branch of the federal government.
   a. The Interstate Commerce Commission, through the Hepburn Act, could set rates.
   b. The Department of Commerce and Labor could monitor business.
   c. Attorney general could rapidly bring antitrust lawsuits under the Expedition Act.
   d. Developed a national parks system that preceded the establishment of the National Park Service in 1916.
Examine What were President Roosevelt's views on conservation, and how did he act on those views?
Taft’s Presidency

- With TR’s backing, Taft easily won the election of 1908
- William Jennings Bryan Democrat (who ran for the 3rd and last time)
William Howard Taft (27th President)

Only person to serve in all 3 Branches of Federal Government:

- House of Reps
- President
- Chief Justice of Supreme Court
C. Main Idea: Although Roosevelt felt Taft was ideal to continue his policies as the next president, many Americans were disappointed.

1. Detail: Taft angered many progressives by signing the **Payne-Aldrich Tariff**, which raised tariffs on some goods.
   - Progressives (like Taft) believed high tariffs limited competition, hurt consumers, protected trusts.
   - Taft wanted to lower taxes but the Senate outmaneuvered him.
   - The Payne-Aldrich Tariff hardly cut the tariffs at all, which angered many Progressives and hurt Taft politically.
C. Main Idea: Although Roosevelt felt Taft was ideal to continue his policies as the next president, many Americans were disappointed.

2. Detail: A serious controversy arose between the former secretary of the interior, Pinchot, and the new secretary, Ballinger, over concern about the nation’s forest and mineral reserves.

a. Gifford Pinchot, head of the U.S. Forest Service, exposed that Ballinger had given business interest special treatment in land dealings.

b. Taft fired Pinchot for **insubordination**, or disobedience to authority.

c. Americans believed Taft betrayed the Square Deal. In congressional elections of 1910, Democrats took the majority in the House, and Democrats and progressive Republicans gained control of the Senate from conservative Republicans.
Turmoil in the Republican Party

- The midterm elections of 1910
- TR saw political turmoil
- Refrained from criticizing his old friend Taft
Turmoil in the Republican Party

- 1910 TR campaigned for progressives in midterm election
- Idea of New Nationalism
- Income and inheritance tax, business regulation and welfare laws
C. Main Idea: Although Roosevelt felt Taft was ideal to continue his policies as the next president, many Americans were disappointed.

3. Detail: Two of Taft’s achievements were the creation of the **Children’s Bureau**, which investigated child labor (today deals with child abuse prevention, adoption, foster care), and the **Bureau of Mines**, which monitored mining companies, made possible many new technologies in the field of mining, expanded national forests, and protected waterpower sites from private development.
Taft’s Achievements

- Taft was a dedicated conservationist, and his achievements in this area equal or surpass those of Roosevelt.
- Reserved more public land
- Filed twice as many antitrust cases in 4 years than TR did in 7 years
- Established Children’s Bureau and Bureau of Mines
Which of Taft's actions most harmed his standing among progressives?
Summarize: How did Presidents Roosevelt and Taft work to limit big business as well as protect natural resources?