New Deal DBQ

Using your knowledge AND the documents provided, write a well-reasoned essay on the following prompt:

How did the New Deal of the Great Depression create a lasting impact on the role of government in business and the lives of the American people?

Document 1


Troy, NY Jan. 2, 1935

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt,

About a month ago I wrote you asking if you would buy some baby clothes for me with the understanding that I was to repay you as soon as my husband got enough work. Several weeks later, I received a reply to apply to a Welfare Association so I might receive the aid I needed. Do you remember?

Please Mrs. Roosevelt, I do not want charity, only a chance from someone who will trust me until we can get enough money to repay the amount spent for the things I need. As a proof that I really am sincere, I am sending you 2 of my dearest possessions to keep as security, a ring my husband gave me before we were married, and a ring my mother used to wear. Perhaps the actual value of them is not high, but they are worth a lot to me. If you would consider buying the baby clothes, please keep them (rings) until I send you the money you spent. It is very hard to face bearing a baby we cannot afford to have, and the fact that it is due to arrive soon, and still there is no money for the hospital or clothing, does not make it any easier. I have decided to stay home, keeping my seven year old daughter from school to help with smaller children when my husband has work. The oldest girl is sick now, and has never been strong, so I would not depend on her. The seven year old is a good willing little worker and somehow we must manage—but without charity.

If you still feel you cannot trust me, it is all right and I can only say I do not blame you, but if you decide my word is worth anything with so small a security, here is a list of what I will need—but I will need it very soon.

- 2 shirts, silk and wool size 2
- 3 pr. Stockings, silk and wool, 4½ or 4
- 3 straight flannel bands
- 2 slips-outing flannel
- 2 muslim dresses
- 1 sweater
- 1 wool bonnet
- 2 pr. Wool booties
- 2 doz. Diapers 30x30 or 27x27
- 1 large blanket
- 3 outing flannel nightgowns

If you will get these things for me I would rather no one else knew about it. I promise to repay the cost of the layette as soon as possible. We will be very grateful to you, and I will be more than happy.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. H.E.C

1. Why might this woman not want to turn to a charity for help?
2. Why could she not afford to get the items herself?
3. Who might help this woman if she were in this position today?
1. What is the WPA?
2. What was the goal of programs like the WPA, and what were at least 2 other alphabet soup programs with the same goal?
I am happy to report that after years of uncertainty, culminating in the collapse of the spring of 1933, we are bringing order out of the old chaos with a greater certainty of the employment of labor at a reasonable wage and of more business at a fair profit. These governmental and industrial developments hold promise of new achievements for the nation.

Men may differ as to the particular form of governmental activity with respect to industry and business, but nearly all are agreed that private enterprise in times such as these cannot be left without assistance and without reasonable safeguards lest it destroy not only itself but also our processes of civilization.

It was in this spirit ... that we approached our task of reviving private enterprise in March, 1933. Our first problem was, of course, the banking situation because, as you know, the banks had collapsed. Some banks could not be saved but the great majority of them, either through their own resources or with government aid, have been restored to complete public confidence. This has given safety to millions of depositors in these banks. Closely following this great constructive effort we have, through various Federal agencies, saved debtors and creditors alike in many other fields of enterprise, such as loans on farm mortgages and home mortgages; loans to the railroads and insurance companies and, finally, help for home owners and industry itself...

The second step we have taken in the restoration of normal business enterprise has been to clean up thoroughly unwholesome conditions in the field of investment... The country now enjoys the safety of bank savings under the new banking laws, the careful checking of new securities under the Securities Act and the curtailment of rank stock speculation through the Securities Exchange Act...

The emergency purpose of the N. R. A. was to put men to work and since its creation more than four million persons have been re-employed, in great part through the cooperation of American business brought about under the codes.

Benefits of the Industrial Recovery Program have come, not only to labor in the form of new jobs, in relief from over-work and in relief from under-pay, but also to the owners and managers of industry because, together with a great increase in the payrolls, there has come a substantial rise in the total of industrial profits – a rise from a deficit figure in the first quarter of 1933 to a level of sustained profits within one year from the inauguration of N. R. A.

1. From the first 3 paragraphs of the speech, why did FDR feel the government needed to fix the banks?

2. From the last 3 paragraphs of the speech, what does FDR credit the National Recovery Act (NRA) with accomplishing?
1. What do each of the bottles on the table represent?

2. Why does FDR need to convince Congress that the plan will work?
1. What program is the poster advertising?

2. Who is the programmed designed for and how is it funded?
1. What comparison is being made by the image?

2. What point is the author trying to make?