

Progressives at reforming the government assignment



Pre-World War One, was a time of permeating corruption and attempts to reform. The Progressives, including Muckrakers and the Progressive Party, tried very hard to reform government policies. The Progressives were quite successful in reforming the government at the Federal and State levels between 1870 and 1920, but only marginally successful at the municipal level. On the Federal level, the Progressives successfully pushed for multiple reforms. Progressives led to the Interstate Commerce Act, the Federal Food and Drug act, the 7th Amendment, and many others.

These acts cut down on corruption Involving the railroad industry, created a branch of the Federal government devoted to ensuring the quality of food and drugs, and allowed voters to directly elect their officials. These reforms were so successful, due to the public belief that corruption was detrimental and Inefficient, that all these reforms are soul In effect. In fact, every single elected US government official besides the president is directly elected by the people, to this very day.

The success of such reforms was due to the inefficient handling of government budgets that led to gross mismanagement of funds, angering the people. On the states level, the Progressives were also quite successful. As mentioned previously, the 17th Amendment, which was enacted due to Progressive pressure, led to the accountability of state officials and took control of political positions out of the hands of political machines. The Civil Service Reform Act meant that government positions could not be taken by inexperienced people as easily.

Wisconsin even allowed women the right to vote, giving half the population a larger say in political matters. Overall, due to Progressive pressure, state-level reforms were widely implemented. On the municipal level, however, reforms could not completely overcome deeply ingrained corruption. Political machines successfully blocked or ignored reforms, leaving them as worthless scraps of paper. The city manager position, implemented successfully in Boston and Houston, failed to successfully eradicate corruption in all cities.

These reforms were a success in some cities, but in the majority of cities were not enough to wipe out corruption. The Gilded Age brought in huge amounts of corruption. Progressive pressure tried as much as possible to get rid of corruption, but corruption was deeply ingrained in society.