

THE GREAT DEPRESSION**Viewpoints**

During the Great Depression, Americans had very different opinions on the extent to which the federal government should regulate business and provide public services. Herbert Hoover inherited a seemingly prosperous economy when he was elected President in 1928. He took office less than a year before the stock market crashed in October 1929. In 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt defeated Hoover and won the first of four presidential terms, two of which would be dominated by efforts to pull the United States out of the Great Depression. ♦ *As you read, consider the different expectations that Hoover and Roosevelt have of federal government. Then, on a separate piece of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

Volunteerism**Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union, December 1930, by Herbert Hoover**

Economic depression cannot be cured by legislative action or executive pronouncement. Economic wounds must be healed by the action of the cells of the economic body—the producers and consumers themselves. Recovery can be expedited [speeded up] and its effects mitigated [eased] by cooperative action. That cooperation requires that every individual should . . . maintain his self-reliance; that each and every one should search for methods of improving his business or service . . . that each should seek to assist his neighbors who may be less fortunate; that each industry should assist its own employees; that each community and each State should assume its full responsibilities for organization of employment and relief of distress . . .

Source: "Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union, 1930," Herbert Hoover, reprinted in John Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *American Presidency Project* (Santa Barbara: University of California, 2005). Available online at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=22458#>.

Presidential Nomination Address, 1932, by Franklin Delano Roosevelt

When—not if—we get the chance, the Federal Government will assume bold leadership in distress relief. For years Washington has alternated between putting its head in the sand and saying there is no large number of destitute people in our midst who need food and clothing, and then saying the States should take care of them, if there are. Instead of planning two and a half years ago . . . they kept putting it off from day to day, week to week, and month to month, until the conscience of America demanded action. I say that while primary responsibility for relief rests with localities now, as ever, yet the Federal Government has always had and still has a continuing responsibility for the broader public welfare.

Source: "Presidential Nomination Address, 1932," Franklin Delano Roosevelt, reprinted at <http://publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu/academics/faculty/loyd/projects/newdeal/fr070232.htm> (Malibu: Pepperdine University School of Public Policy).

Questions to Think About

1. According to Hoover, what two groups of people are primarily responsible for improving economic conditions?
2. What authority does Roosevelt hold responsible for most of the relief effort? for the broader public welfare?
3. **Contrast** Explain the fundamental difference between Hoover's and Roosevelt's opinions on the federal government's role in economic recovery.