DIFFICULT DECISIONS

HOOVER AND FEDERAL PROJECTS

On the one hand, President Hoover opposed federal welfare and intervention in the economy. On the other, he felt that government had a duty to help solve problems and ease suffering. The question was, What kind of assistance would be proper and effective?

1. Consider the pros and cons of Hoover's actions during the Depression. Did he do enough to try to end the Depression? Why or why not?
2. If you had been president during the Great Depression, what policies would you have supported? Explain the approach you would have taken.

Gassing the Bonus Army

In 1932, an incident further damaged Hoover's image and public morale. That spring, between 10,000 and 20,000 World War I veterans and their families arrived in Washington, D.C., from various parts of the country. They called themselves the Bonus Expeditionary Force, or the **Bonus Army**.

THE PATMAN BILL DENIED Led by Walter Waters, an unemployed cannery worker from Oregon, the Bonus Army came to the nation's capital to support a bill under debate in Congress. The Patman Bill authorized the government to pay a bonus to World War I veterans who had not been compensated adequately for their wartime service. This bonus, which Congress had approved in 1924, was supposed to be paid out in 1945 in the form of cash and a life insurance policy, but Congressman Wright Patman believed that the money—an average of $500 per soldier—should be paid immediately.

Hoover thought that the Bonus Marchers were "communists and persons with criminal records" rather than veterans. He opposed the legislation, but he respected the marchers' right to peaceful assembly. He even provided food and supplies so that they could erect a shantytown within sight of the Capitol. On June 17, however, the Senate voted down the Patman Bill. Hoover then called on



In 1932, these veterans from Muncie, Indiana, decided to remain in the capital until their bonus was paid to them.

MAIN IDEA

Summarizing D What did the Bonus Army want?

the Bonus Army marchers to leave. Most did, but approximately 2,000, still hoping to meet with the president, refused to budge. D

HOOVER DISBANDS THE BONUS ARMY Nervous that the angry group could become violent, President Hoover decided that the Bonus Army should be disbanded. On July 28, a force of 1,000 soldiers under the command of General Douglas MacArthur and his aide, Major Dwight D. Eisenhower, came to roust the veterans. A government official watching from a nearby office recalled what happened next.

A Personal Voice A. EVERETTE MCINTYRE

"The 12th infantry was in full battle dress. Each had a gas mask and his belt was full of tear gas bombs. . . . At orders, they brought their bayonets at thrust and moved in. The bayonets were used to jab people, to make them move. Soon, almost everybody disappeared from view, because tear gas bombs exploded. The entire block was covered by tear gas. Flames were coming up, where the soldiers had set fire to the buildings to drive these people out. . . . Through the whole afternoon, they took one camp after another."

—quoted in *Hard Times*

In the course of the operation, the infantry gassed more than 1,000 people, including an 11-month-old baby, who died, and an 8-year-old boy, who was partially blinded. Two people were shot and many were injured. Most Americans were stunned and outraged at the government's treatment of the veterans.

Once again, President Hoover's image suffered, and now an election was nearing. In November, Hoover would face a formidable opponent, the Democratic candidate Franklin Delano Roosevelt. When Roosevelt heard about the attack on the Bonus Army, he said to his friend Felix Frankfurter, "Well, Felix, this will elect me." The downturn in the economy and Hoover's inability to deal effectively with the Depression had sealed his political fate.

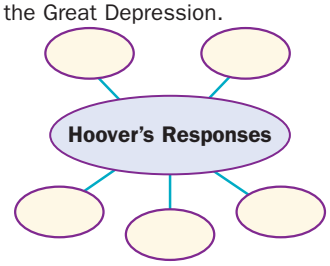
SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

1. TERMS & NAMES For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- **Herbert Hoover**
- **Boulder Dam**
- **Federal Home Loan Bank Act**
- **Reconstruction Finance Corporation**
- **Bonus Army**

MAIN IDEA

2. TAKING NOTES
In a cluster diagram, record what Hoover said and did in response to the Great Depression.



Which response was most helpful? Explain your choice.

CRITICAL THINKING

3. ANALYZING ISSUES
How did Hoover's belief in "rugged individualism" shape his policies during the Great Depression?
Think About:

- what his belief implies about his view of people
- how that translates into the role of government
- Hoover's policies

4. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS
When Franklin Delano Roosevelt heard about the attack on the Bonus Army, why was he so certain that he would defeat Hoover?
Think About:

- the American public's impression of Hoover
- Hoover's actions to alleviate the Great Depression
- how people judged Hoover after the attack