Essay Question: How far were the economic reforms of Witte the most important development within Russia between 1881 and 1903?

Bell Work: How would you go about planning this essay? 4 minutes!
X FACTOR: What was the role of Witte in making economic developments

*Trans Siberian Railway-St Petersburg to Moscow to Siberia and Vladivostok

- Witte acquired **foreign loans** to pay for it from western and central Europe. France provided 33% of all foreign loans
- Economic construction **effectively financed**
- Railway helped open up vast economic **potential of Siberia** and first effective overland route to Russia’s Pacific territories
Development of capital goods, coal, iron, steel and oil, the building blocks of future economic growth

- **Coal production**: 6,000 tons in 1890 to 16,000 by 1900.
- **Oil production**: 3,800 to 10,600
- **Iron and steel**: 2,000 tons in 1890 to 8,200 in 1900
- Opened the Putilov Engineering works.
- Donbass region of Ukraine coal production increased markedly, so did the production of oil centered on the Caspian sea port of Baku.
- Another significant development linked to this was the industrial working class rose from 1.4 million in 1890 to 2.6 million in 1906
- Due to rapid industrialization there were poor living and working conditions in these areas
Impact of Witte on the peasantry

- Witte leaves unresolved major social and economic problems associated with **peasantry**
- Under authority of the **village commune**
- As population rose in the countryside this put huge pressure on **landholdings**. To meet the rise in population, **village communes** redistributed the land.
- As a result average peasant landholdings in Russia fell from **35 acres** to **28 acres in 1905**
- **This was at a time of raised taxes on peasants** to pay for economic growth. As well as the famines in 1891, 1892, 1898, and 1901
• This resulted in growing resentment towards an already oppressive government taxation and lower yields from their smaller landholdings
• As a result there was the outbreak of the *jacqueries* (spontaneous peasant uprisings*)
• When peasants attacked landowners and their property, usually to destroy rent records and arrears.
• Many of these *jacqueries were extremely violent*
• *(This refers to the uprising of the French peasants against the nobility in 1358)*
NEXT FACTOR: Development of Political Repression

• Liberal reforms of Alexander II were reversed by his successors (Alex III Nic II)

• Alexander III reversed the Loris Melikov reforms which were designed to establish a national consultative assembly and would have formed the basis of Russia’s first constitution

• The Statute on Measures to Preserve National Order and Public Peace passed in 1881, most oppressive system out of all of the Great Powers

• Renewed every year until Feb 1917, originally only meant for 3 years after the assassination of Alexander II
Russia becomes a police state, police had enormous powers to arrest, imprison and exile any political opponents.

In 1887 a law on universities were implemented after the discovery of plot amongst university students to assassinate Alexander III. It established strict government control over their operations.

Main targets of the Okhrana were extremist political groups such as the People Will (Nihilists).

They arrested the main culprits of Alexander II’s assassination and were executed.

Other followers emigrated many to London.
In 1889, an important aspect of the new repression was the appointment of Land Captains. These were centrally appointed officials who replaced local justices of the peace.

In 1890 Land Captains became members of the Zemstva (elected local government committees responsible for local education and administrative matters), and ensured Alexander's III new repressive laws were enforced.

Land Captains closed down newspapers that were critical of the regime.

Essentially they limit the power of the Zemstva.

Alexander III recreated absolute rule by the Tsar.
Next factor: Developments against ethnic minorities

- **Jewish Pogroms of 1890’s**
- Jews compromised just **5.2%** of the Empire’s Jewish population
- Most of the Jewish population was concentrated in Western Russia in an area known as the **Jewish Pale** (which is modern day Belarus)
- Jews were accused of engaging in a worldwide conspiracy against Russia, **many fled to America and Britain**, in the wake of the pogroms against them
- Both **Alexander III** and **Konstantin Pobedonostev** were anti-Semites
• **Russification**, Russian language official language of government and education in an attempt to bring **cohesion and conformity to the Empire**.

• It was to ensure over **50% of the Russian population** were to speak the Russian language.

• In practice it was a logical step to bring the **vast multi-ethnic empire together**, but implementation was very different as they saw the policy as a way for **repressing national identity**
NEXT FACTOR: Developments in the church and education

• To ensure the preservation of the Christian basis of the Russian state, Pobedonostev put all Zemstva-controlled primary schools under the control of the Russian Orthodox church.

• All children irrespective of their religious background were forced to learn about the Russian Orthodox religion.
NEXT FACTOR: The development of opposition to tsardom