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# The Gloom in Resurrection City

WASHINGTON — The Poor People's Resurrection City has not been a very happy place these days. For almost a week, rain beat down steadily on the plastic roofs of the beaverboard shacks. The plastic was put there to let the sun shine in. But when there is no sunshine the seams of the plastic drip rain.

The rain might have had a pleasant sound if there hadn't been so much of it; or if there was something else to do in Resurrection City. All you can do is sit and think. "Sometimes," said a woman from Georgia, "we just sit."

"The park around the Lincoln Memorial is going to be a mess," said one Washington resident.

It's already a mess. The area inside the snow fence which forms a stockade around the shacks has been a sea of mud. It's the same kind of a mess inside another stockade at the other end of the park, where slaves were held in the 1850s when their families were broken up to be shipped to northern Virginia and the tobacco plantations of southern Maryland. Abraham Lincoln, then a Congressman, looked down on that slave market and made his resolve to become President and free the slaves.

**THE STATUE** of Abe Lincoln looks out today on the stockade in the park alongside his memorial. All night long a light shines on his rugged features, and his eyes have the appearance of never sleeping as he looks out on the city housing the descendants of those stockade residents of one hundred years ago.

He wonders, no doubt, what brought the poor people marching up from the South and what progress they have made in the hundred years since emancipation.

On paper they have made a lot. Belatedly they have the right to vote. Theoretically they have the right to sit beside white children in equal schools. They can patronize the same restaurants, use the same restrooms, buses, hotels, and railroad trains. The days of Jim Crow are over. But do they have the equal right to make a living? Are they permitted to enter the skilled labor unions? Are the cards stacked against them when it comes to the land laws?

Above all, are they forced off the land which they have plowed and hoed and cultivated through the generations?

**THE ANSWERS** are contained in a thick green volume entitled "Department of Agriculture and Related Agencies' Appropriations — Fiscal Year 1968," which contains the names of the big farmers who are subsidized by the rest of us for keeping their land idle. The book does not contain the names of the poor people who are thereby forced off the land.

Thumbing through these pages, the answer is definitely yes. The cards are stacked against the poor people of the South. The laws are written so they favor the big

land-owner, not the tenant farmer who is made homeless by the laws written by a Congress where the key committee chairmanships, the power establishment, stem from rural areas of the United States.

Thumbing through the subsidy payments made to cotton plantation owners in Mississippi, you get some idea of how things are stacked against the poor people. In Sunflower County there is Mrs. Eastland, wife of the Senator from Mississippi, who gets \$129,977 in one year for cutting back cotton acreage. There is also W. D. Paterson, who gets \$67,600; plus many, many more.

There is a total of 340 plantation owners in Sunflower County alone who received \$6,809,529 for cutting back cotton acreage and throwing poor people off the land. And this includes only those who get \$5,000 or more from Uncle Sam. Those receiving below \$5,000 are not tabulated.

**TODAY IN CONGRESS** the same members of the House and Senate who voted for these subsidies are demanding a cutback on antipoverty, education, and city housing.

The people who sit under the plastic roofs in Resurrection City listening to the rain beat down on the flimsy shacks don't know these things. But members of Congress do. They should read the thick green volume listing these subsidies. After reading, they should balance the economic score.

