Acadian Year

Reflection on the upcoming celebration of the bicentennial of the Acadians' arrival in Southwest Louisiana produces more and more concern for what the spiral of history has brought about and could promote with greater community concern among our people.

It seems indeed that there is much latent energy and talent behind the commemoration of a rather tragic page in American history, but perhaps not time enough in a commemorative event to discover and detail it all. Excellent plans have been laid for receiving Cardinal Roy, blessing the statue of Our Lady of the Assumption, and calling general attention to the fact which Aug. 15 will note in retrospect.

Of broader consequence, however, is a deeper study into the patterns of life of these Acadian people, their native capacities, the conduct of family life and the fruits of their culture, the impact of their civilization on American patterns, at least in this portion of the country, the potential at hand in any form of 'self-consciousness' and a projection into the future of their common presence.

The SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA REGISTER in other days has done editorials, feature stories and general articles on the number of Acadian names among the clergy on the accomplishments of numerous Acadian descendants, both clerics and laymen, on the background of these people in their original homestanding in Nova Scotia. If seems now that further investigation of this remarkable ethnic community and its relation with the total community of Louisianna, the South and the nation would prove enlightening.

We propose in the days ahead to probe these areas and others of interest to the religious and civil patterns of the diocese and the broader territory now known as Acadiana. We will plan to investigate the social, moral and intellectual roots and developments of the Acadians and the hopes for their broader fulfillment as Catholics and Americans, as well as the service they are capable of rendering to their Church and their country.

We propose two things: That those responsible for the current celebration of the bicentennial declare a 'Year of the Acadians' to provoke further discussion of this people and their place in our society; and that a serious symposium be planned at some time during this year in which scholars and serious students of history and culture can make a contribution to the wholesome self-awareness of the Acadian community. Others might well profit from the same concentration of thought.

There is more to reviewing historical patterns than many publishers of progress generally allow. We would like to see both approaches combined in a serious study over a year's time.

Southwest La. Register
Aug. 5
p. 6