CODOFIL Confab
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and heritage was endorsed and
commended by numerous pub-
lic officials from Louisiana and
foreign countries this past week
curing the International Con-
egress of the French-speaking
Americas, held in Lafayette.

The convention, the first of
its kind to be held in Louis-
isiana, attracted representa-
tives of between 15 and 20
French-speaking countries
and provinces. The three-day
event was held on the
campus of the University of South-
western Louisiana and was
sponsored by the Council for
Development of French in Lou-
isiana (CODOFIL).

Registration rolls exceeded
1,000 persons from the French
Canadian provinces, the New
England states, France, Lou-
isiana and the French Carib-
bean islands.

Governor-elect Edwin Ed-
wards promised Wednesday his
administration will continue
supporting efforts to preserve
Louisiana's French language
and culture. Speaking in French,
Edwards boasted of his French
maternal heritage and praised
Gov. John McKeithen for the
supportive role he has played
in trying to preserve the French
language.

"Both Louisiana and my ad-
ministration propose to go on
with the work so well started
by the Council for the Devel-
opment of French in Lou-
isiana (CODOFIL)," Edwards
said, referring to the state
agency created by the 1968
legislature to preserve and ex-
and the use of French in Louis-
iana. "This task must go on
until our Louisiana will have
become bilingual."

In another speech Wednesday,
Phillipe Maland, Secretary of
State to the French Prime Min-
ister in charge of civil ser-
vice, thanked Governor Mc-
Keithen, who, he said, has
backed every effort to preserve
French in Louisiana.

When the congress got under
way Monday Secretary of State
Wade Martin said that the de-
velopment of second languages
holds the key to a good rela-
tions among nations and may
be a guarantee of peace.

A five-man panel of Lou-
isiarnians pointed out the value
of Louisiana French in intern-
national trade and commerce,
during a Monday session. Par-
ters and educators were urged
to encourage their children and
pupils to learn the French lan-
guage as an important asset for
those seeking careers in intern-
national commerce, during the

Panel members were Emile
Billeaud, marketing officer of
the Guaranty Bank and Trust
Company of Lafayette; Robert
Alario, vice-president in
charge of foreign sales for
Nolty J. Theriot, Inc. and
Theriot Overseas Sales, Inc.
of New Orleans and Golden
Meadow; Alden Sonnier, Lou-
isiana representative on the
Rice Council for Marketing
Development; and Allen Bab-
ineaux, president of the Laf-
yette CODOFIL Chapter, of
Lafayette.

Billeaud told the delegates
that they are at home in Lou-
isiana and said there is no
limit to what can be accom-
plished among the peoples with
a common heritage. He review-
ed activities of the foreign de-
partment of his bank in the fields
of currency conversion and as-
sistance to businessmen inter-
ested in foreign trade.

Alario recited advantages of
the French language to per-
sonnel in his company engaged
in worldwide commerce. "In-
ternational commerce is like
domestic commerce--it's a
matter of communications," he
said.

Opportunities for jobs in in-
ternational commerce are
available for bilingual young
people, he said, noting social
advantages of being able to
speak French and English. He
encouraged Louisianians to
spend the time, money and ef-
fort needed to preserve and
expand Louisiana French.

Sonnier echoed Alario's pos-
tion and told of the advantage
of the ability to speak French
provided him during World War
II when he saw service in the
European Theater of oper-
ations. Sonnier, who for a per-
iod of 19 years provided local
news and comment in French
on a Crowley radio station, told
of the advantages he found in
bilingualism in his work open-
ing new markets for Louisiana
rice.

Babineaux, whose remarks
centered on international tour-
ism, underscored Louisiana's
gographic position and the div-
ersity of her fishing and festi-
vals to the international tour-
ist. South Louisiana hospitality
is an important tourist-attract-
ing asset, he said.

The Acadiana area, sitting
between New Orleans and
Houston, with its proximity to
the Gulf of Mexico, offers the
tourist unique vacation oppor-
tunities, he said.