CODOFIL Holds First General Assembly

Officers and members of an Executive Committee were recently named for the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), at the first general assembly of the newly-appointed 50-member statewide council.

Members of the council, whose names were recommended by the state legislature to Governor Treen during the 1980-81 legislative session, were recently appointed by the governor. The June 20th meeting in Baton Rouge was their first general working session, and it was at this meeting that the members of the Executive Committee were named. Under the leadership of James Domengeaux, founding Chairman of CODOFIL, members will direct activities intended to increase participation by the public in CODOFIL's French programs. Other committee officers named are: Mr. J.B.C. Graugnard of Edgard, Vice-Chairman; Dr. Patrick Robinson of Monroe, Secretary; Ms. Helen Lancaster of New Orleans, Treasurer. Committee members include: Mr. Gary Mannina, New Orleans; Dr. Charles Foti, Gretna; Dr. Elmo Authement, Thibodaux; Mr. Joseph Patrick, Shreveport; Dr. Carlos Fandal, Monroe; Chancellor Cecil Taylor, Baton Rouge; Mr. Truman Stacey, Lake Charles; and Mr. A.J. “Sookie” Roy, Marksville. The 18-member Executive Committee consists of one representative from each congressional district and six at-large members, as follows: Dr. Homer Dupuy, New Orleans; Mr. David Marcantel, Jennings; Mr. Paul C. Tate, Mamou; Mr. John Olivier, Sunset; Mr. Homer Dyess, Baton Rouge; and Dr. William Arceneaux, Baton Rouge.

In addition to naming the Executive Committee, council members discussed the present status of the CODOFIL French program in Louisiana. Encompassing more than 30 parishes on the elementary level, this program now employs some 116 Louisiana teachers trained in French as Second Language Specialists and more than 150 Belgian, French and Quebec teachers. Methods of strengthening the program were brought up for discussion by the council members.

Act 714, which deals with the establishment of the French program in Louisiana parishes, was also a subject of discussion. Passed by the Louisiana legislature in 1975, this act requires a school system to establish a K-12 program of second language instruction when at least 25% of the heads of households of students attending the school request such a program by petition. Tested in the courts in 1977 in Jefferson Davis Parish, the act was upheld and now serves as a means of expanding existing French programs in the state.

The 50-member council will hold its second meeting in Lake Charles during the week of October 12, that week marking the 200th anniversary of the defeats of the British army to a combined French and American force at Yorktown.