The U.S. State Department in Washington, D.C. recently wrote the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL) office, expressing “delight” for the Cajun hospitality shown to Amega, the Supreme Court Justice of Togo, Africa.

Amega was on a State Department tour of the United States and stopped off in Lafayette for a visit in the CODOFIL office, which turned out to be the high point of his U.S. tour, said the State Department.

As a visitor in the International Visitor Program from the U.S. State Department, Amega spent a day visiting in the CODOFIL office and touring the Acadiana area with CODOFIL representatives. Amega said that he had heard what CODOFIL is doing in Louisiana to help the whole state become bilingual and he was interested in visiting because he “had a special desire to meet French speaking black people, particularly in a rural area.”

Togo Bilingual
Amega’s own country, Togo, is bilingual and predominantly agricultural state. The land had been a German Colony before World War I and then was under French administration until 19. It has a population of 2,300,000 and is half the size of Louisiana.

Amega became an “Acadien d’Honneur” at a meeting with former USL Deans Paul Delaup and Tom Arceneaux. After a visit with USL foreign language professors, he and Father J. M. Jammes, Director of CODOFIL chapters, went to visit French-speaking Negro families.

St. Martinville Dinner
In St. Martinville he ate a dinner prepared by French-speaking women for a church festival at Notre Dame de Perpetual Secours. Then the Togo diplomat toured the St. John’s Plantation Sugar Mill under the direction of an engineer who claimed to be non-French speaking while giving detailed explanations of the mills’ operations in French.

Amega was shown the “joie de vivre” of the Acadiana area at an international dinner in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Dartez of Arnaudville and expressed his feelings by saying, “It is a real asset for blacks to be bilingual for the work they may be called to do someday in connection with Africa. I do believe it is an invaluable asset since it helps in the communications of cultures which must meet and work with one another.”

French is the working language in Togo. It is the language spoken in offices, the language in which all public speeches are made, and the language used for all international relations. Amega feels that it is easier for people who speak the same language to understand and love one another. He finds a certain degree of equality and development in the countries who are fighting for the preservation of the French language.

Amega was impressed during his October visit with the job CODOFIL has done to carry the French language all over Louisiana and expressed optimism by saying, “In six year if you can continue what you have already accomplished, I feel certain that you will succeed in making Louisiana as bilingual as Togo is.”

High Point
Amega described his trip to Lafayette as the high point of his entire U.S. itinerary. And after Amega returned to his country in Africa, CODOFIL received a letter from the U.S. State Department saying that he was impressed by the extent and depth of CODOFIL’s relations with the French speaking black farmers. CODOFIL Chairman James Domengeaux and Amega share the same feelings that Louisiana can produce the competent, educated, bilingual black to fill the needs in the economic and business world, as well as for world diplomacy, government and education.