Representatives from 20 Countries Will Take Part

3-Day Event Scheduled for Lafayette

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LAFAYETTE, La. — Representatives from 20 countries of the French-speaking world will convene here April 3-5 for the International Congress of the French-Speaking Americans, James Domengeaux, chairman, Council for the Development of French in Louisiana, has announced.

Top state officials, diplomats, congressional leaders from Louisiana and the New England states, all Louisiana colleges and universities and other agencies from the United States and abroad are cooperating with CODOFIL in conducting the three-day event.

Bilingualism and the cultural and economic enrichment benefits of the French language will be discussed by participants from France, Quebec and French-speaking countries in both the Caribbean area and Africa. Louisiana Gov. John J. McKeithen, and Gov.-elect Edwin W. Edwards will address the assembly.

Main speakers will be Jean Louis Gagnon of Ottawa, general manager of Information Canada and former chairman of the Federal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism; Yves Berger of Paris, member of the High Committee for the Defense and Expansion of the French Language; Yves Michaud of Quebec, commissioner general for cooperation with the exterior; and, Adelard Savoie, president of the University of Moncton, New Brunswick.

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Domengeaux said the congress is expected to attract many Louisianians who are interested in the French renaissance to Lafayette in addition to participants from Atlantic states and abroad. Major foreign newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations have indicated that they will cover the Congress. An international press workshop organized by the Louisiana Press Association will be held prior to the opening session April 3.

The first day's events will include welcomes by the city of Lafayette and CODOFIL followed by an introduction of honored guests by Secretary of State Wade O. Martin. A panorama "CODOFIL and the French Renaissance in Louisiana" will be presented with James Bezou of New Orleans as narrator.

"Acadian Humor" will be the highlight of the April 3 luncheon with Paul Tate, CODOFIL board member from Mamou as chairman. Also participating will be State Comptroller Roy Theriot and Harris Periou, chairman, of the St. Martin chapter of CODOFIL.

"French Language and Culture in Louisiana" will be the subject of a panel discussion held by representatives of Louisiana colleges and universities. The first day's program will close with a crawfish party.

Opening the April 4 session will be a roundtable discussion by participants from Africa, Belgium, France, the French Antilles, Guiana, Haiti, Quebec and Louisiana. They will review "Cultural and Economic Enrichment Through the French Language."

"Bilingualism in North America" will be reviewed by Mr. Gagnon; "A Frenchman Views the Louisiana Experiment" will be given by Berger. A folklore evening will be held at the Lafayette Municipal Auditorium on April 4 with Nicolas Doclin of Radio Canada, Montreal, directing. The goal of the program is to help the French world better understand Louisiana's French heritage and the movement to preserve and expand the language. Groups from Lafayette, Breaux Bridge, Abbeville and Houma will take part.

The final day of the international meeting opens at 10 a.m.