Crawfish Seen As Big Business

PERRE PART — ‘The crawfish industry can become a multi-million dollar business in a very short time with the cooperative effort of all those who feel that the crawfish deserves a special place on the dinner tables of America.’

So said State Rep. J. Burton Angelle at the second general meeting of the Louisiana Crawfish Industry Development Association, held here this week. Angelle is president of the association.

The meeting attracted many trappers, buyers, restaurant owners and ordinary consumers from both the east and west sides of the Atchafalaya River.

Angelle told the gathering of the $30,000 state appropriation which is being used in research toward the marketing and development of the Louisiana crawfish.

Also on hand was Secretary of State Wade O. Martin Jr., who said the state was “extremely interested” in the research and promotion of the industry.

“As far as we are concerned, the sky is the limit,” Martin said, adding “The fantastic crawfish industry has only begun to be developed.”

Another speaker was Cecil LaCaze of the Louisiana State Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, who said he is devoting almost 100 per cent of his time in researching new methods of trapping and harvesting crawfish. LaCaze stated that he had heard rumors that rice farmers are not being allowed to seine crawfish from rice fields, ponds or other impounded areas. He stated that he knows of no law to this effect and advised crawfish ranchers, trappers and farmers to call on him at his Opelousas office for any question regarding the trapping and harvesting of crawfish.

Ridley Boudreaux, of the Louisiana Tourist Development Commission, narrated a nearly completed color slide presentation on the history, farming, trapping and preparation of the Louisiana crawfish. It is hoped this presentation, when completed, will be shown on television stations throughout the country, Boudreaux said, adding that the tourist commission hopes to play a major role in creating a demand for the Louisiana crawfish. ‘Once we help create that demand, it will be up to you to supply that demand,’ Boudreaux told the gathering.

Dr. R. Onela Smitherman, leader of the Louisiana Cooperative Fishery Unit at Louisiana State University, showed a series of educational color slides on the preparation of crawfish. Smitherman and his constituents have been involved in a research program at LSU, and submitted a progress report to the association.

Smitherman mentioned that of the 29 species of crawfish found in the state, the Red Swamp Crawfish is the most popular. On the problem of bait, the fisher unit noted that beef melt and fish heads presently used in crawfish traps are too expensive. Dr. Smitherman’s group has been experimenting with putting bait in aluminum screen envelopes to lengthen the life of the bait and also are in the process of researching less popular baits.