Crowd of 400 Addressed by CODOFIL Chairman

Preserving Language Is Aim of Quebec Trip

NEW IBERIA, La.—As many as 10,000 Louisiana students may visit all the French-speaking countries in the world by 1980 if the momentum of Louisiana's French movement continues at its current rate.

This statement was made Saturday by James Domengeaux, chairman of The Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), the state agency created for the preservation and extension of French in Louisiana.

Domengeaux addressed a crowd of more than 400 at Acadiana Regional Airport in New Iberia. The occasion for the gathering was departure ceremonies for 95 students and teachers of French from throughout the state who were preparing to leave Sunday for a five-weeks educational trip to Quebec, Canada. Twenty-five others left from New Orleans Sunday.

Part of the group of 120 will participate in a study program at Jonquiere College and the remainder will enroll in summer camps in Quebec Province, where they will be taught French in an informal camp setting.

The trip to Quebec is part of the statewide movement to preserve, improve and expand the French language in Louisiana.

"Exposure by these students and teachers to a complete French environment will intensely increase the interest in the program to rejuvenate the French language in Louisiana and to some extent compensate for the erosion of the French language as formerly used in our homes," Domengeaux said.

SPEAKING URGED

Urging the students and teachers to speak French while in Quebec, Domengeaux said, "The purpose of the trip is to improve your French by speaking it.

Canada the message that we are proud of our language."

Domengeaux announced the appointment of Patout Burns, president of the Iberia Parish School Board, to the 50-man CODOFIL group to replace the late Milton Voorhies of New Iberia. Burns was master of ceremonies at Saturday's event.

Among the public officials who attended the meeting Saturday were Ronald Lockheed, Canadian Vice-Counsel, stationed in New Orleans; Roy Theriot, state Comptroller; Dick Guidry, state representative from Jefferson Parish, and Jules Mollere, state senator from Jefferson Parish, and challenger for the seat of Third District U.S. Congressman.

Before wishing the travelers "bon voyage," Domengeaux assured them, "You are going to visit some of the finest country God has made.”

Louisiana’s French renaissance has the “unanimous approval” of north and south Louisiana, he said. North Louisiana legislators do not see the movement as provincial, but as beneficial to the whole state and to its economy, he noted.

Domengeaux praised the Louisiana congressional delegation and especially Third District Congressman Patrick Caffery of New Iberia for securing federal aid for the French movement in Louisiana.

Caffery was instrumental in securing a projected $800,000 in federal funds for French programs that will be implemented in the next five years in conjunction with the state's French renaissance.

Following the meeting, Caffery said he helped secure a pledge of $210,000 from the federal government for 1970-71 to aid in the preservation, improvement and extension of the language.

CAFFERY SPEAKS

During the meeting, Caffery addressed the group in French: "We expect you ... to represent us in Canada with the typical Acadian dynamism and to participate actively in the revival of our common tradition.

"Remember with pride your parents in Louisiana who share with your Canadian hosts the spirit of our French heritage.”

State Representative Dickie Breaux from Jeanerette urged the travelers to let the Canadians know that Louisianians recognize their French heritage and are proud of it. "Bring to..."