Domengeaux Sees La. as French Education Center

Lafayette CODOFIL Unit Formed as State’s Sixth

250 Heard ‘Grand Voix’ of Movement

LAFLATE, La. — Louisiana could become this country’s center for French education within a relatively few years, according to James Domengeaux, chairman of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana.

Domengeaux made the statement before a crowd of about 250 who were gathered for the organizational meeting of the Lafayette Parish Chapter of CODOFIL.

He said 30 French teachers from France are in Louisiana schools teaching French to elementary school pupils. “The French government would have sent 100,” but the demand was not great enough at the beginning of this school year, Domengeaux said. The French government is “intensely interested” in Louisiana’s French renaissance, he noted.

This state has embarked on an exchange program with France and Quebec, which is a French-speaking Province of Canada, Domengeaux stated. Nearly 300 Louisiana students and teachers participated in exchange programs this past summer, he said, adding that they went to France, Quebec and Guadeloupe, a Caribbean Island where French is the principal language.

CODOFIL is trying to attract more people from France and Quebec to come to Louisiana to make French television programs, he noted.

Dr. Thomas Arceneaux, who chaired the meeting, said a true bilingualism is a “valuable asset” in fostering good international relations between the United States and the French-speaking countries of the world.

A program is underway in Louisiana for improving French education on the grade-school and high-school levels, he pointed out. The plan was put into action by an act of the Louisiana Legislature in 1968, when it created CODOFIL, the state’s official agency for the French-speaking education of this nation.

The 68 legislative act urged all public elementary schools in the state offer a five-year program of French instruction not later than the opening of the 1972-73 school year.

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Arceneaux is a long-time French movement leader and is Dean of the College of Agriculture at the University of Southwestern Louisiana.

In official business at the meeting, the chapter’s charter was adopted and its 20-member board of directors approved. Those nominated to the board are Patrick S. Robin, Preston Bobbenaux, Emile Billouard, Lester Breaux, Alex Brennard, Mrs. Charles L. Corne, Mrs. George Gardner, Joseph Glorioso Jr., Herbert Heymann, William H. Michot, Malcolm Mou-