French Education Push Supported

Fearing the French language may be lost in South Louisiana within a decade, Lafayette legislators have announced support of educational programs to reverse the trend.

Led by Sen. Edgar G. Mouton Jr., they met Saturday to express a sense of deep loss because French program records of the Department of Education were destroyed by fire Friday.

Included in these records were the complete proceedings of the French-Acadian conference held under the department auspices at the University of Southwestern Louisiana here two weeks ago.

Because of the success of the conference, the legislators invited Miss Audrey Babineaux to discuss the program under consideration.

The legislators — Mouton, Rep. J. Luke LeBlanc, and Representatives-elect Dan Guillot and Fredric Hayes — plan to invite other legislators throughout South Louisiana to a meeting to work out an expanded program of French education.

"Bilingualism is a great economic asset," Mouton said. "There are jobs available in the military, diplomatic service, overseas business and construction, not to mention teaching, for area people — professional and skilled — who can speak French in addition to English.

"We should capitalize on this heritage in the future. It is unfortunate that our people have not been able to do so in the past," the senator noted.