French National Senator Speaks

Sen. Jacques Habert, French National Assembly representative in the United States told the morning session of the International Congress of the French Speaking Americas that Acadiana “can be proud of its French heritage.” Habert, who is the publisher of the French newspaper France Amerique in the United States and the author of history books told delegates and area residents “you can perform a great service to America by speaking French.”

‘Happy To Hear’

“We are happy to hear you talking with your accents,” the French historian said in response to a comment made by Sen. - elect Paul Hardy of St. Martinville. Hardy made the opening remarks at the morning session today and introduced Habert.

Hardy said that people in Acadiana speak with different French accents.

‘Needs Citizenry’

“America needs citizens who can speak French,” Habert said, “As an example, Americans and Frenchmen fought side by side in World War I and World War II; in Vietnam, the Vietnamese speak French as a second language.”

The Frenchman urged a continuation of the French renaissance in Louisiana and called for a continuation of the bilingualism movement in Louisiana school systems.

‘Must Forget’

“We must forget our differences of opinion,” Habert said. “Be proud of our heritage. I am not speaking chauvinistically as Frenchman.”

Habert addressed the assembly on the theme of “The Influence of French Culture in the World” and divided his speech into categories of pride, heritage and the need to know the language.

Outlines History

He briefly outlined the history of the French in the United States and in particular in Louisiana.

“After two centuries of separation from France we are happy to see this French renaissance in Acadiana,” he said.

Following Habert’s speech at 10 a.m. at the Angelle Hall Theater on the University of Southwestern Louisiana campus where the Congress is meeting, panelists from Africa, Belgium, Canada, France, Gaudeloupe, Haiti, Martinique and Dr. Roch Minabeau of Southern

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University, presiding, discussed the French language and the multi-national community during a forum.

Lead Discussion

At 3 p.m. today, State Sen.-elect James Fontenot of Abbeville was to lead a discussion on the French dimension in America, followed at 4 p.m. with an address by the chief of the Haitian delegation on The French Language, A Means of Understanding Among People.

Tomorrow evening the Congress will adjourn after its closing banquet at the Lafayette Municipal Auditorium where Louisiana Gov.-elect Edwin W. Edwards will speak.

Open To Public

All general sessions at the Angelle Theater are open to the general public, and reservations for Edward's 7:30 p.m. address may be made by calling the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana office in Lafayette at 233-1020. CODOFIL is sponsoring the three-day event.

Yesterday morning Louisiana Secretary of State Wade O. Martin Jr., Lafayette Mayor J. Rayburn Bertrand and Gary J. Hebert, president-elect of the Louisiana Press Association and publisher of the Plaquemine Post, were among those who welcomed the various delegations to Lafayette and Louisiana.

'Expression Of Idea'

Martin told the morning session yesterday that the Congress is an expression of an idea that is very dear to (him), and died found to be in the very theme of the Congress.