NEW ORLEANS — "Without a sound program in the schools French will be lost forever to Louisiana as a native tongue," CODOFIL Chairman James Domengeaux said today as he announced departure of the largest group yet for summer study in Quebec.

"And it will be today's Louisiana youngsters who will be deprived of an important factor of strength in the ongoing but changing battle for social, cultural and economic supremacy in their personal lives and in that of their State and Nation."

200 Leave

Some 200 students and teachers leave New Orleans airport this weekend for a four-week credits - granting course in Jonquiere and Riviere - du Loup respectively 120 miles north and northeast of Quebec City. At the same time 80 will be leaving Houston airport for Poitiers and Montpellier in France. The students' transportation and tuition are paid for in general by the parents and by the Governments of Quebec and France. Fourteen are winners of the State and District Rally who were awarded scholarships under Legislative appropriation. The majority of the teachers will be following special courses under U.S. federal funding. The summer program this year includes six French language broadcasters of Louisiana's radio stations. They will study French - language and broadcasting methods and networks in Montreal and Quebec City.

Great Benefit

Domengeaux said the summer courses and of great benefit to the students and the teachers. He thanked Quebec and France for their "generosity understanding and foreign aid to the United States." But he said these programs can at best only be a complement to "a well-articulated sequential program of French instruction from the first grade upwards."

Without this kind of program, he said the "natural asset" of a language already spoken natively by a third of Louisiana's close-to-four million population will be lost forever.

"The leaders of tomorrow will be multilingual," the CODOFIL Chairman said. "Louisianans will be prominent among those leaders if the local school authorities of this State will have had the foresight in 1974 to recognize the priorities inherent in an increasingly intricate world where economic power itself will be begotten by the power to communicate."

CODOFIL is short for the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana, a State Agency created by unanimous vote of the 1968 Legislature.