French-Teaching Funds Are Sought

Gov. John J. McKeithen was asked today to assist in providing funds for the teaching of the French language in the public schools of Lafayette and throughout South Louisiana, beginning in the first grade.

Among those meeting with the governor at 10 a.m. today were the four legislators from Lafayette; James Domengeaux, former U.S. Congressman; and Raymond Rodgers, professor of political science at the University of Southwest Louisiana.

A meeting with State Superintendent of Education William Dodd is planned in the near future.

The delegation presented to McKeithen a letter explaining the need for French instruction in the area schools and a resolution signed by 22 area legislators, supporting the proposition.

The letter noted the diminishing use of French in the homes of South Louisiana during the past few years, due to the impact of television and other factors.

Bilingual ability, a rarity in the United States, is possible because of the French heritage in the area, the letter stated.

At present, the perpetuation of the language is essentially dependent upon the availability of French instruction in the schools and colleges of the state, beginning with the first grade, the letter noted.

"If this is not done, we fear our Louisiana French heritage will necessarily die on the vine," it continued.

Benefits of the program, the group said are "incalculable—economic, cultural, tourism, and above all making available (Continued on Page 2, Col. 5)"
to the young student an opportunity to learn two languages with equal facility.”

The group cited the schools of the Canadian Province of New Brunswick, where 70,000 students out of a total of 160,000 are in bilingual schools. Ontario, with only about 10 per cent of its population French-speaking, has established bilingual high schools.

In the resolution handed to the governor today, the delegation said that South Louisiana will serve the United States in educational, commercial, military and diplomatic needs in the French language, if funds for the program are made available.

Signing the resolution were: Armand J. Brinkhaus, representative - St. Landry; H. B. DeJean, representative - St. Landry; Frank J. Diesi, senator - St. Landry; Espe Marioneaux Jr., representative - Point Coupee and Iberville; Dr. Ramson Vidrine, senator - Ville Platte; J. M. Knowles, senator - Calcasieu; Fredric G. Hayes, representative - Lafayette; and O. C. “Dan” Guillot representative - Lafayette;

J. M. Broussard, representative - Acadia - Vermilion; Joseph E. Corell, representative - Evangeline;


Harvey Peltier Jr., senator - LaFourche - Terrebonne; Cleveland J. Marcel, representative - Terrebonne; Richard D. Talbot, representative - Terrebonne; Claude Duval, senator - Terrebonne - Lafourche; and Lionel Lapeyrouse Jr., representative - Iberia - St. Mary.