Preserve French Influence, Canadian Says at BR Feast

A Canadian Supreme Court justice told some 500 Louisiana residents that preservation of the French language and culture was highly important and that efforts in this regard spread from this deep South state to northern Canada.

Justice Andre M. Dechene headed a list of VIP's attending the seventh annual Acadian hog butchery breakfast at the Belmont with Comptroller Roy Theriot as host. Dechene was the principal speaker and was presented an honorary doctoral degree in "worldly wisdom" at the event.

The honorary degree was presented by the Boswell Institute of New Orleans.

Louisiana officials, legislators and visitors from the Cajun country were on hand for the event, and consumed couche-couche and gratons and other Acadian dishes in huge quantities. History buffs and gourmets joined in the celebration.

Couche-couche and gratons for the uninitiated are fried cornmeal mush and cracklings. Also on the menu were pain de mais au gratons, fromage de tete de cochon (hoghead cheese), saucisses fumees (smoked sausages), patates douces frites, (fried sweet potatoes), sirop de canne (cane syrup), lait (milk) and cafe (coffee).

Comptroller Theriot, a dedicated Cajun, has sponsored the dejuner de boucherie acaden (hog butchery breakfast) for seven years. This year's celebration was the most elaborate ever.

Many state officials were on hand including many legislators.

Justice Dechene, whose home is in Alberta, Canada, said one reason for his visit was obvious. "It was 20 degrees below zero when I left home last week," he said. It was a mild 62 degrees outside.

The visitor said it was a great pleasure to be on hand and he pleaded for preservation of French language and culture. "We want you to know that a few million of us in Canada share your ideals in this regard," he said. "The French language is the most important in the world. Teaching of language was once a religious enterprise, but this is no longer true."

The breakfast was dedicated this year to Paul Tate of Mamou as an outstanding Acadian. Allen Babineaux, a former state representative, presented an award to Tate, an attorney and civic leader of Mamou.

Miss Jeanne Castille of Breaux Bridge and Agriculture Dean Thomas Arceneaux of the University of Southwestern Louisiana were crowned as queen and king of the breakfast by Theriot. A French band provided music for the event.

The degree of doctor of worldly wisdom was conferred on Justice Dechene by Dr. George Noel-Cooper, acting president of the Boswell Institute, assisted by Dr. R. G. MacNeill, consul general of Canada, and Dr. Brendan F. Brown, chancellor of the Boswell Institute and professor of law at Loyola University.

Mayor President W. W. Dumas welcomed guests to the event.