FRENCH CONGRESS

Lafayette play host for the next three days to a remarkable gathering of scholars and diplomats from all over the French-speaking world as the International Congress of the French Speaking Americas takes place here.

This congress is not just for politicians, foreign diplomats, and French professors. The congress is for everyone—not only for those who speak French, but also for those who would like to speak French or who have married into French families or who have French-speaking neighbors or who live in French communities and, of course, anyone who is interested in French culture, traditions and heritage.

The French language and French culture would become a major tourist attraction for all these French-speaking peoples around the globe. Those who learn to speak French in their formative years open up for themselves unusual opportunities for careers in diplomacy, foreign trade and international business.

A BIG MISTAKE

It was the official aim of the State Department of Education, dominated by North Louisiana administrators, to make the speaking of French a sign of inferiority.

Many parish superintendents pointed out with satisfaction that it was no longer necessary to hire French-speaking teachers. Now, of course, many school boards (not enough in Acadiana) are scurrying around in attempts to find teachers who can teach French.

We are happy that educators are seeing the light. They have found out that the ability to speak two languages is a gift not to be lightly dismissed.

But there is much work to be done in the education field in order to preserve the French heritage. We urge everyone to participate in the Congress and underscore the fact that an estimated one and a half million people in Louisiana speak the French language and want it to remain a vital part of Louisi-ana.