Theriot Honors Acadians at 11th Annual Breakfast

Quebec Envoy Delivers Principal Talk

By CLARE PUNKEY
(Times-Picayune Staff Correspondent)

BATON ROUGE, La. — The Acadians, real and honorary, were out in full force here early Monday morning to take part in State Comptroller Roy Theriot’s 11th annual breakfast tribute to their heritage and culture.

There was a king, Acadian-descended Eddie Dufresne Sr. of St. Charles Parish, Louisiana political and agricultural figure. And there was a queen, Mrs. Eli Ardoin of Eunice, also of Acadian descent, whose husband was a former king of the breakfast.

Theriot placed the crowns on the heads of the two rulers as the function began at 8 a.m. in the ballroom in the Bellemont Motor Hotel.

There were dignitaries from France and Canada and Louisiana among the gathering breakfasting on such delicacies as pain de mais, gratons, boudin, saucisses fumées and many other tasty Acadian tidbits.

There was considerable talk about Louisiana’s contribution to the restoration and preservation of the French language, including the principal address by Leo LeBlanc, the representative of Quebec to Lafayette, La., in this project.

Among listeners were the consul general of France at New Orleans, Jean LeCanneller; the consul general of Canada, Pierre Asselin, and the French cultural attaché at New Orleans, Jean Pettinelli.

This year’s breakfast was dedicated to the Rev. Msgr. George A. Bodin, rector of St. John’s Cathedral in Lafayette, La., for outstanding work in compiling genealogical records of Acadians in Louisiana.

The dedication was made by Dean Thomas J. Arceneaux of the College of Agriculture, University of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette, who noted that Msgr. Bodin was a native of Jeanerette, La., and had been ordained to the Catholic priesthood in 1938 by the late Bishop Jules Jeannard of Lafayette.

Former Gov. Jimmie H. Davis was a breakfast participant and was prevailed on by the host to do a bit of his “You Are My Sunshine” to the accompaniment of Happy Fats’ Cajun Band and the assemblage.

The widow of a former Louisiana governor, Mrs. Blanche Long, was introduced by Theriot.

Mayor W. W. Dumas of Baton Rouge made an appearance at the breakfast to welcome the guests and to confer honorary citizenship on LeBlanc, the guest speaker.

LeBlanc, introduced by former U.S. Rep. James Domengeaux of Lafayette, who is now president of CODOFIL, cited a need for development of ethnic languages in the United States.

He said that the United States, which initiated the era of communication through instant communication, is running the risk of becoming isolated through not being able to communicate because of non-development of ethnic languages.

He noted the strides being made in Louisiana toward preservation and restoration of the French language, and said that Louisiana through CODOFIL could be a window on the French speaking world and the center of French teaching.

He commended state Education Supt. William Dodd for his cooperation through the schools in this program of French language preservation.

It took more than hour for the long lines of guests to file by the serving table where among those serving was Miss Karen Ritchie of Egan, queen of the Louisiana Swine Festival.

Lafayette artist Bert Bertrand presented some of his Louisiana work to Msgr. Bodin and to LeBlanc.

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