

สารนิพนธ์

THESIS ABSTRACTS

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The Nation-Wide Mayor Conference: A Comparative Study of the First and the Second Conference

Thai municipalities, an important form of local government, came into existence after the revolution of 1932. This form of local government was intended to provide a significant basis for democratic government.

But the municipalities in Thailand today live by a miracle. They are not operating effectively in regard to current services and new developments. Many different kinds of problems confront the Thai municipalities as in all cities of the world today.

A nation-wide mayor conference was introduced as a tool to examine and help solve some of these problems. The first conference was held in June, 14-23, 1954, and the second in October, 12-20, 1959. This thesis presents a comparative description and analysis of the two conferences. From the study, some important matters become clear: namely, the nature of the problems confronting the general municipal administration, the solutions proposed by the conferences, the administrative behaviour of the central and municipal administration, the extent to which the proposed solutions affect central policies and the degree to which they are being put into use. The Thesis also examines certain aspects of the central-municipal relationship and the trend in the municipal administration.

Chapter II describes the organization of the two nation-wide mayor conferences, as well as the general background. Most striking perhaps is the fact that the two conferences were initiated by the central government. The local governments lacked the initiative to operate the meeting as a means of improving their local affairs. The study indicates that the people do not profoundly understand, or strongly demand, democratic government. Accordingly, the municipalities are now under the close supervision and control of the central government.

In Chapter III, it is shown that from every municipality comes complaints of inadequate financial resources. They declare their inability to find the money required to finance current municipal services. The solution proposed by the two conferences is to request more grants-in aid. However the development of municipal tax systems, especially the property tax, is needed very badly as a main source of municipal revenue. To some extent, the two conference

requested more decentralization of financial administration, especially to increase the authority of the mayor and the provincial governor to effect public contract and purchase. It is noticeable that the proposals which do not threaten central finances are more acceptable. One suggested way to enable municipalities to enlarge and carry on their services and utilities has been to create the Municipal Development Loan Fund organized by the Ministry of Interior

Not only financial problems confront the municipalities. Personnel problems have also received considerable attention. Chapter IV describes the main problems of personnel administration and some proposed solutions. In the first instance, there appears to be a great need to promote the status of the municipal employees who are now, in practice, under the Municipal Commission in the Ministry of Interior. The problem of high turn-over due to low prestige is one which cannot easily be solved because of the social values involved here. The progressive idea of position classification should be encouraged and put into practice in order to help get a standard personnel system.

In Chapter V, some important problems of the municipal services concerned with public safety are examined. The problems summarized are the lack of technicians, and inadequate money and materials. The possible solutions expected through the help of the central government will be difficult to implement.

The form of municipal government is discussed in Chapter VI. The form of municipal government proposed by the first mayors' conference was different from that proposed by the nation-wide meeting of provincial governors held in the same year. The mayors' idea did not anticipate any change in the present form of the municipal government, but the provincial governors felt a need to change to the "city manager" form. This Chapter reflects this trend of new changes in the form of municipal government.

From the study, the most striking conclusion is that the local people including the executives of municipal government have not enough experience and knowledge of local self-government. Securing the interest of citizens in local affairs, and their active participation in its government, are matters of great importance. The central government has had almost complete control over the municipal administration for a long time, which encourages lack of local initiative. The national supervision and control of the municipal government and the centralized municipal personal system operated by the Ministry of interior, is hierarchical and makes the Thai municipalities different from those of foreign countries.

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