

**THE ROLE OF MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY OF THAILAND
IN THE CONTROL OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION**

by Prathan Kongrithdi

The present system of Thai municipal government first came into existence in 1933. It has been said that the system imitates the national parliamentary government and that its first and most immediate purpose is to familiarize the Thai people with the parliamentary system of government. The municipal government thus serves as a school of political democratization for parliamentary democracy. All municipal corporations are deemed by law to be composed of the Municipal Assembly and the Municipal Council. Under the current system the Municipal Assembly, as the representative body of the local people and being entirely empowered to perform legislative function and to control executive administration, is of great significance for effective local administration.

This thesis attempts to indicate how the existing role of the Thai Municipal Assembly adversely affects administration by the executive committee, resulting in difficulties and ineffectiveness of the Municipal Council. The study covers the historical evolution of Thai municipal government, the nature and significance of the municipal assembly, the role of the municipal assembly in the enactment of by-laws based upon the power provided in the Municipal Act, its role in municipal financial control and in administrative control over the Municipal Council acting as the executive agency of the municipality, and its role in the present Revolutionary Period. The thesis also explains some of the crucial problems involved in the improvement of local administrative controls by the Assembly.

The author points out four problems that have become the main barriers to the progress of local government and administration in Thailand. First, there is the problem of the decentralization of municipalities. Secondly, the passive character and behavior of the people manifests itself in political apathy, as is shown by the concept of acceptance. This creates problems in in-

itiating and conducting local popular elections. The third problem originates from the legal fact that the Assembly has no ultimate authority. Its decisions are somewhat perfunctory, as they are sometimes influenced by the executive committee as well as by central government. Lastly, the experience, competence, initiative and reasonable use of discretion by the assemblymen themselves is not of uniformly high quality.

Since the Municipal Assembly has a key role in municipal government, it should be dominant, fair and beneficial to local administration. This study on the role of the Municipal Assembly of Thailand in the control of local administration indicates clearly the immediate need for improvement, particularly in the four problem areas which are discussed.

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