



เอกสารเผยแพร่ประกอบการจัดนิทรรศการ

เรื่อง

พระปกเกล้าฯ กับรัฐธรรมนูญไทย

เล่ม ๒



จัดแสดง ณ อาคารรัฐสภา ๑ สำนักงานเลขาธิการสภาผู้แทนราษฎร
ระหว่างวันที่ ๖ พฤศจิกายน - ๓ ธันวาคม ๒๕๓๘

หอสมุดรัฐสภา สำนักงานเลขาธิการสภาผู้แทนราษฎร

NOTE**Democracy in Siam**

The question whether a democratic form of government is suitable, or ever will be suitable, for Siam or not, has been discussed among the intelligentsia of Siam for a long time, and is even now being discussed by the semi-educated people, some of whom having aired their opinions in the Siamese press. The general concensus of opinion is that Siam is not at present ready to have a democratic form of government but may have to adopt it at some distant date. Some people assert that parliamentary government will never be suitable for the Siamese people, giving as reason that it is only the Anglo-Saxons who have been able to make a success of that form of government.

There is no doubt that a democratic form of government requires a high degree of development of the people to be a real success. It is even possible that there must also be certain racial qualities (which the Anglo-Saxons possess to a high degree) if democratic institutions are to be really beneficial to the people as a whole and to be really and truly democratic, not only in form, but also in fact. Too many democracies are so only in form.

Now I am also inclined to think that a real democracy is very unlikely to succeed in Siam. It may even be harmful to the real interests of the people. One could readily imagine what a parliamentary form of government would be like in Siam and then there is no need to go into details. I shall just mention one fact, that is the parliament would be entirely dominated by the Chinese Party. One could exclude all Chinese from every political right; yet they will dominate the situation all the same since they hold the hard cash.

Any party that does not depend on Chinese funds cannot succeed, so that politics in Siam will be dominated and dictated by the Chinese merchants. This is indeed a very probable eventuality. One could easily find many arguments to support the idea that Siam ought not to have a parliamentary form of government. This being the case, one may ask "Then why think about democracy at all?" The answer is that one must remember that the majority of people do not think rationally but think only sentimentally. This is particularly true of the crowd. There may come a time when the Siamese people will clamour for a parliament. (Are there not signs of that even now in Bangkok?) It would be of no avail to explain, even with the best of reason, that a parliamentary government is not suited to the racial qualities of the Siamese. They will surely yell louder that they are being oppressed by a tyrannical ruling class, and there may be some trouble. (At the present moment I do not believe that there is any Siamese who would sacrifice his life for a political faith.)

Perhaps some countries have adopted democracy merely as a necessity, knowing full well that it does not suit the character of the people. That is why there are countries who play at having parliaments. It seems to me that it is quite on the cards that we shall have to play that sort of game in Siam sometime. It is with these considerations in view that I am now considering certain reforms.

It seems to me that, if it is admitted that some day we may be forced to have some form of democracy in Siam, we must prepare ourselves for it gradually. We must learn and we must educate ourselves. We must learn and experiment so as to have an idea as to how a parliamentary government would work in Siam. We must try to educate the people to be

politically conscious, to realize these real interests so that they will not be misled by agitators of mere dreamers of Utopia. if we are to have a parliament, we must teach the people how to vote and how to elect representatives who will really have their interests at heart.

The reorganization of the Privy Council is an attempt to carry out the first step of these ideas. It will be said that the Committee of the Privy Council as reorganized will not really represent public opinion in general, and that as a body it will not really be representative of the interests of the people. This is, of course, quite true. It is firstly intended to be an experiment and an education in methods of parliamentary debate. I believe that the experience to be gained will be useful. The body may possibly reflect something of the general public opinion, and I do not think that it will be entirely useless. It is to be expected, however, that the creation of this body will not satisfy everybody, and that it will be variously criticised. (I do not believe that it is possible to do anything or organize anything without being destructively criticised by a certain section of the people in Siam.)

The next step in our education towards democracy would be the organization of municipalities. This will be a means of teaching the people how to vote, and the experiment would also prove useful and instructive. It will certainly be better for the people first to control local affairs before they attempt to control state affairs through a parliament. I sincerely believe that if reforms are gradually introduced in this way, a democratic form of government could possibly be introduced without too much harm. But the process must be very gradual and carefully administered in doses. If the experiments fail at every step, then it may be possible to persuade

Another question which has also occupied the minds of all thinking men in Siam is the danger of unrestrained absolute power of the King. Absolute monarchy, like democracy, may become harmful at any time, because both principles rely on the perfection of human nature, a very frail thing to depend on. A sound democracy depends on the soundness of the people, and a benevolent absolute monarchy depends on the qualities of the King. It is unfortunately a fact that every dynasty, however brilliant, will sooner or later decay, and the danger of having some day a bad king is almost a certainty. I believe that every method has been tried so as always to obtain a good king on the throne, and every method has developed some flaw. The method of elected kings seems to be sound in principle; yet it produced some of the worst tyrants, i.e. some of the Caesars of Rome.

The alternative method used is to chance on having a bad king and make some institution that could control him.

This method also fails occasionally, as in the case of King Charles I of England, but on the whole it has worked fairly well.

I most earnestly desire to organize some institution which will serve to restrain any arbitrary or unwise actions of the King in Siam. (I presume that nobody will want to restrain his good actions?) I feel that if I succeeded in evolving something really useful, I would have done a great service to my country and the Dynasty.

The question is, what institution shall we organize now, admitting that the parliamentary system is impossible for the moment

Perhaps the new Committee of the Privy Council could be made to serve that purpose in a small way? This is the reason why I think Mom Chao Sithiporn's opinion is of some interest. I should like, however, to suggest

a slight modification. A clause could be added to or after Article 13 saying that- "If fifteen members of the กรรมการองคมนตรี make a written request to the President of the Committee, asking the President to submit to His Majesty the King that certain matters are of importance for the general welfare of the country and the people, and that His Majesty should be graciously pleased to allow the matters to be discussed by the Committee, the President shall submit a petition to His Majesty, asking for a Royal sanction to hold a meeting to discuss the matters." It is understood that the King may grant the permission to hold the meeting or not as he thinks fit. (It is the right of veto recognized by all democracies. The King can also dissolve parliament.) I think that in this form, it is quite admissible and is much better than to grant a general right to a non-elected body to hold a meeting at any time. I believe that it will be able to fulfil its purpose of being a deterrent to those in power from acting arbitrarily or against the interests of the State. Anybody in power would hesitate to refuse such requests, unless he has very good reasons. Of course, a perfectly unscrupulous man may possibly refuse the request. But then with such a man, no institution could prevent him from doing bad actions, not even a parliament (cf. Charles I), and the only thing to do then is to chop off his head!

Thus the formation of this Committee may possibly serve two useful purposes (however imperfectly):-

1. As a means of experimenting and learning in methods of parliamentary debate.
2. As a restraining influence against misuse of power.

Note. It should be noted that the English translation of องคมนตรี as Privy Councillors is somewhat misleading, as our Privy Council, particularly as reorganised, will resemble the English Privy Council only in name. There is no intention of imitating the British Privy Council. We must try and evolve our own Political Institutions and not merely copy others. That is why I believe in making experiments.

Copy.

Sukhodaya Palace.

July 23rd. 1926.

Dear Dr. Sayre.

I am sending you with this letter a memorandum on some of the Problems of Siam with a Questionnaire for your consideration. I am afraid I have written it in rather a hurry, so that I could send it to you before our conversation to-morrow. We will have a preliminary talk to-morrow when we can discuss those questions more fully. I should like to have your answer in writing when you have considered them fully.

This Memorandum by no means exhausts all the problems of the country. I have only treated of those that I think important. If you have any other opinions beside the question touched upon, they will be very welcome.

I hope that they are making you comfortable at the Phya Thai Hotel.

Yours sincerely
(M.R.) Prajadhipok. R.

PROBLEMS OF SIAM.

1. The Constitution.

a] The position of the King.

The Kings of Siam are supposed to be elected by the people. In former days a Ceremony of election was Performed. At the death of the King, a Council consisting of Royal Princes, Ministers of State and High Dignitaries of the Church was held. The Senior Prince or Minister then proposes that such and such a Prince should be elevated to the Throne and asks if anybody has any objection. There is generally no answer to this question, but sometimes an answer in the affirmative is given by saluting with the hands or an inclinations of the head. The King is then formally proclaimed and the words "elected by the people" are added to his titles.

This custom was continued to the Fifth Reign. King Chulalongkorn then made an innovation by creating a Crown Prince, who succeeded to the Throne without question, the formality at the death of the King being a sort of proclamation only.

King Rama 6th, not having any son, it was resided in a Cabinet Council that he should be succeeded by his full brothers. Later he made a Law of succession.

This Law of Succession contains 2 distinct principles i.e. the Principle of election and the Principle of Hereditary succession. In this law it starts by saying that the King reserves the absolute right of appointing any member of the Royal Family as his Successor. But should the King die without having appointed a Successor, the Succession will go to his sons. This sounds straight-forward enough, but a complication arises here owing to the habit of polygamy. The Law specifies that the sons of Somdetch Phra Rajini should have the precedence over the others. Then the preference goes to the sons of the mother next in rank to the queen (there are 4 different ranks and descending the scale finally to the sons of concubines). Again this sounds all right in principle, if it were not for the fact that a concubine may be raised in rank at any time, AND the Queen herself may have her rank lowered according to the whims of the King. This, to my mind, creates very great possibilities of complications. I would suggest that priority of the sons be regulated by the birth ranks of the mothers. I mean priority be given to the sons born of a Princess, such as daughters of a King, then nieces of a King and so on. If there are more than one son of mothers of the same rank, the succession would then go by the seniority in age of those Princes. When there are no sons the succession would go to the King's brothers. According to the Law as it is the priority is still regulated by the **created** rank of the mothers. I would suggest the same modification as above. The next question is that the Law does not make it quite clear, when there being no brothers left or when the one who should have succeeded has died. Whether all the sons of that Prince would be eligible to the Throne or whether it is only the sons of the Principal wife only who

could succeed. The case has really occurred which shows that in the late King's mind ALL the sons could succeed. In my case the son of the Prince of Petchabun was passed over by the expressed wishes of the late King. Now, many people find that the idea that All the sons could succeed was objectionable owing to the fact that some Princes have the most disreputable minor wives who are really not fitted to be the mothers of Kings. They also say that the Siamese follows the Indian custom and wants their Kings to be born of a Princess of the Royal family. Such Princes are known as "being born in a pure womb". They are the Chow Fas.

The questions of principles involved, of which I would like to ask your opinions are :

1st Question

Should the King have the right to choose any Prince as his Heir? If the King has this right, ought not this right to be extended to a Council of High Princes and Ministers of State, in the case when the King dies without having chosen an Heir. At present the King alone has the right to nominate an Heir. It would be perhaps more logical to allow a Council of some sort to exercise that right when the King has not done so. This would be more consistent with the idea of an Elected King.

2nd Question

Should the principle of choice be admitted at all or ought the

succession to be by birth alone, and ought there to be some amendments to the present law or not?

The Powers of the King.

As you well know, the King has absolute power in everything. This principle is very good and very suitable for the country, **as long as we have a good King.** If the King is really an Elected King it is probable that he would be a fairly good King. But this idea election is really a very theoretical one, and in reality the King of Siam are really hereditary, with a very limited possibility of choice. Such being the case, it is not at all certain that we shall always have a good King. Then the absolute power may become a positive danger to the country. Besides this, things have very much changed. In olden days the actions of the King were hardly ever questioned. It would not have been safe to do so. The King was really respected and his words were really laws. But things began to change with the new order of things. In the days of King Chulalongkorn, the King was still very much feared and respected. Even then towards to the end of the Reign, there was a young party who began to criticize the King in many ways, but not openly. In the Reign which has just ended, things got much worse, for many reasons which I have no need to tell you, as you know them well enough. The King has become a person liable to be influenced by anybody who could gain the ears of a favourite. Every official is more or less suspected embezzlement or nepotism. Fortunately the Princes were still respected as being on the whole honest folks. What was very regrettable was that the Court was heartily detested and in later years was on the verge of being

redicaled. The birth of FREE PRESS aggravated matters still more. The position of the King has become one of great difficulty. The movements of opinion in this country give a sure sign that the days of Autocratic Ruler ship are numbered. The position of the King must be made more secure it if this Dynasty is going to last. Some sort of GUARANTEE must be found against an unwise King.

What form then should the Government of Siam take?

3rd Question

Must this country have a Parliamentary system one day, and is really the Anglo-Saxon type of Parliamentary Government suitable to an Eastern people?

4th Question

Is this country ready to have some sort of representative GovernmentM?

I personally have my doubts as to the 3rd question. As to the 4th question, my personal opinion is an emphatic No.

What then should be done in the meanwhile? My first attempts to find some sort of guarantee for the person of the King is the creation of the Supreme Council.

The Supreme Council.

The Genesis of the Supreme Council is worth telling with some detail.

I have discussed the idea of such a Council among my friends for some time, before I had any idea that I should have the opportunity of creating it myself. The idea found a firm supporter in Prince Damrong. Just one day before the late King's death, I consulted the Princes Bhanurangsi and Paribatra about this idea. The former was not very keen on it, as he thought that it would lessen the prestige of the King, but the latter was enthusiastic. When the King died, it was decided that the Supreme Council should be created at once. We had 2 days only to prepare a proclamation, and 3 days after the death of the late King, the Supreme Council was proclaimed by the means of a speech to the Privy Councillors.

I will now explain the reasons for creating this Council in such a hurry. As you know, the late King was beginning to loose the confidence of the people towards the end of the Reign and the question of Succession caused great anxieties. The only High Prince with any reputation was Prince Paribatra and many people would have liked the succession to go to him, while it was well known that the King was expecting to have a child, and should he not have a boy the succession would go to his brothers whom, I am sorry to say, the majority of people did not think much of. For myself, I was a dark horse and in any case inexperienced in affairs of state. Very fortunately for me, on the death of my brother Asdang, I had several

occasions to act for the King during his absence from the Capital and during his illness. I was fortunate enough to have been able to gain the confidence of the Ministers and High Princes, so that my candidature to the Throne had the approval of those persons. I also had the best support from Prince Paribatra. On my succession to Throne it was thought absolutely necessary to do something at once to gain the confidence of the people, hence the creation of the Supreme Council. This had its immediate effect and I really gained the confidence of the people in one day. The reason why this action had such an immediate result was that it promised many desirable things.

Firstly, that the Royal Family is getting together and will work in harmony.

Secondly, that the King was willing to seek the advice of highly respected Princes who have had experience of State affairs and who have the confidence of the people, none of the HATED official class being included in this Council.

Thirdly, that the King's power to take arbitrary actions would be lessened by this Council (remember that in the present state of opinions in the country, the King is thought to be more liable to do more harm than good).

Therefore the immediate result of the creation of the Supreme Council had been very good and I think that it has served

its purpose very well and that my action was well justified. Since then, people have had time to reflect a little and the Supreme Council has come to be criticized a great deal. I will enumerate some of the criticisms and questioning about it.

1. People ask whether the Supreme Council is an advisory body or an executive body. Some think that the Council has too much power. I would answer that the Council is entirely advisory since it cannot carry out any executive actions at all. Its opinions have executive effect through the King alone. The way that the Council work at present is that it meets in the presence of the King and NEVER meets without the presence of the King except by special order. Questions submitted to the Council are : all questions of policy, questions of national finance, appointments of High officials such as Ministers of State, questions of high and special rewards such as ranks of Chow Phya and Grand Crosses (there has been abuse and backstairs influence in the past) and questions concerning tradition and important ceremonials. The King may also seek advice in personal or Royal Family affairs.

In any question that concerns any Ministry, the Minister responsible may be invited to attend the meeting.

The Supreme Councillors sit in the Cabinet Council and give their opinions. Final decision on important matters such as the promulgation of a New Law or the signing of a treaty is always given in the Cabinet Council. Both in the Cabinet Council and in the

Supreme Council the decision of the King alone prevails, although in the ordinary course of events, the King always adopts the opinion of the majority, but being still absolute he need not necessarily do so.

2. It is criticised that the Supreme Council being an advisory body should not sit in the Cabinet Council which is an executive body. I admit that this is quite true. This system is only adopted for the sake of convenience. It would make business much slower if the Supreme Council were not to sit in the Cabinet as any question decided on in the Cabinet will have to be deliberated on again in the Supreme Council. And since the King alone decides all questions, it does not seem necessary to introduce any complications at the present stage. If there is a Prime Minister to preside the Cabinet Council and who will submit the decisions of the Cabinet to the Kings, then it would be well to have the Supreme Council as a separate body which the King could consult and then give his final decision. We will talk more of this later.

3. That there should be some law to indicate and regulate the duties of the Supreme Councillors. This is certainly needed, and a draft law has been drawn up, but owing to the conflicting opinions as to WHAT SHOULD BE THE DUTIES of the Supreme Councillors, I have shelved that draft for the present until a clearer idea of what is the best form to give to such a Council is forthcoming.

4. That the Supreme Council is approved of at this moment owing to the personalities of the Councillors, and that in the cases

when these Councillors are replaced by others, the Council would not have the confidence of the people. I think such ideas are rather pessimistic. If there are no more good men in the future, we can have no hope for Siam.

5. That the existence of the Supreme Council lessens the prestige of the King. I admit that this is true, but I consider that the prestige of Kingship in this country can hardly be lower than at this moment. I have already explained the causes I doubt very much whether the old prestige could ever be regained. I think that the evolution of the public opinion in Bangkok and educated class has already gone too far, and that it would be a wild goose chase to try and get back any of the old glory. The King should be content to do all the good he can, even though the credit were given to somebody else. I believe that at the present time and with the sentiment of the people as it is at this moment, all credit will always go to somebody else to some Minister or some Prince, if there is no Supreme Council. If any things goes wrong, it would be attributed to influence of some wicked person and the foolishness of the King is being influenced by that person. People seem to have the idea that the King is a sort nonentity who is easily influenced by anybody, and that he has no opinion of his own whatever. This statement may sound exaggerated, but it is really very near to the truth.

6. That the Power of the King is lessened. This is, of course, what is intended. As I have already said, the days of absolute power are numbered. The S.C. certainly lessens the King's power to do harm by the arbitrary actions, but surely, it does not lessen his power to

do good as he ought to be supported very wholeheartedly by the S.C. in that case.

I believe that some of the reasons why the S.C. is so much criticized and feared now is some sort of sentiment of envy. Anybody who has the ears of the King is always hated. It also makes backstairs influence rather difficult, because the people will now have to go to 5 or more backstairs instead of one or two.

Having stated some the criticisms against the present form of the Supreme Council, I would put the.....

5th Question

What is the best form to give to the Supreme Council? Is it worthwhile to make it a permanent institution of the country, or should it be allowed to die a natural death?

The Cabinet.

You have said in your article in the Atlantic Monthly that the Governmental system of Siam is in water-tight compartments. This is perfectly true, but I think that it is inherent to the system of having Ministers each responsible to the King alone. Each works for the benefit of his Ministry alone and not to the benefit of the whole. An attempt has been made to improve matters by having weekly meeting. At least the Ministers meet once a week to discuss matters

together, and I think that there has been a real improvement. But it would be better still if we were to have a Prime Minister to preside over the Cabinet. He should be allowed a fairly free choice of his colleagues, so that the Cabinet will work well as an homogenous body. The Ministers will be nominated by the King after having conferred with the Premier. I believe that this would be a real gain to the country. The Supreme Council will then act as a controlling body. I have already indicated the line in which work would be done under this system. The thing to decide is, whether this system should be used now or later.

6th Question.

Should we have a Prime Minister? Should this system be inaugurated now?

The Legislative Council.

The question of having some sort of Legislative Council has been discussed many times. A sort of Legislative Council was created early in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn. This Council consisted of Ministers of State and 12 nominated members. The Council remained in existence for about 5 years and since then has become a dead letter although some of the Councillors of those days are still living. I think that it was given up because it was felt that there was no real need for such a Council and that it only delayed the work of the Ministers.

When the late King came to Throne, the Prince of Pitsanuloke recommended the formation of a Council of State similar to what existed in Russia at that time (not the Douma). I believe the matter was discussed in a Cabinet meeting, but the scheme was not adopted, owing to the opinion of Mr. Jens Westengaard who thought that any makeshift form of Parliamentary system would serve no good purpose.

Prince Damrong has now submitted a new idea of a Legislative Council, composed of officials nominated from every Ministry. This Council will really work as a sort of Law drafting Commission. We have already got a Department for drafting laws, and I am not sure that the proposed Council would be able to do the work better. Rather the contrary I am afraid, and it will delay work too. Besides that, it may attempt to criticize the policy of the Ministers, and as the Councillors are officials in the Ministries appointed for a time only, the system may not be very good for discipline. The difficulty about such a nominated Council has always been the question of recruiting the members. At the present moment we cannot afford to pay the members, and we cannot get unpaid members.

7th Question.

Should we have a Legislative Council? What should be the constitution of such a Council? (I have received many petitions to form some sort of Council).

2. Financial Affairs.

I will not say much about financial affairs as I do feel that I am not competent in the matter. I think that we have a very capable advisor in Sir Edward Cooke.

The one important question is the proper division of the resources available among the Ministries. I know that, in your opinion. We spend too much on the Defence forces. I am inclined to agree with you in this respect, yet the cutting down of expenditures on Defence is a very serious responsibility. Very few people dare advocate such a thing, as we have too many experiences of the swashbuckling policy of our neighbours.

I am getting the whole of our financial policy overhauled, but I am somewhat at a disadvantage in not really competent in the matter.

8th Question.

Have you any opinion as to our financial policy?

3. Internal Affairs.

The one change of importance that I am contemplating at this moment, is the organizations of Municipal Councils. I think that, at first, these Councils should be nominated. Later on we might try

Municipal elections. This would give some idea as to the possibility of inaugurating some form of representative government. It will satisfy the advanced opinions of the country, and will be a good demonstration as to whether the people are really ready to have an effective voice in the affairs of the country.

Another question which I consider important is the Chinese question. The Chinese are very useful in Siam. In former days they marry Siamese women and became very good Siamese citizens. But since the Chinese revolution, there has been quite a change. Now the Chinese bring their wives from China, and are determined to remain Chinese. They organize schools in which they teach practically only the Chinese language. There is a rather disturbing state of affairs, as we lose a source of good and laborious citizens, and with the new ideas in China filtering through, it becomes a latent danger.

9th Question.

Can something be done to make the Chinese become Siamese as in the old days? (In the Straits Settlements they are willing to become British subjects).

These are all the problems which we have not yet found satisfactory solutions or which are doubtful as to the proper way to attack. Others are being solved or on the point of being solved.

Saranromya Palace

July 27th 1926

May it please Your Majesty,

In the memorandum which Your Majesty was gracious enough to send me on July 23 Your Majesty asked me to reply to the following nine Questions :

1st Question. Should the King have the right to choose any prince as his heir? If the King has this right, ought not this right to be extended to a Council of High Princes and Ministers of State in the case when the King dies without having chosen an heir? At present the King alone has the right to nominate an heir. It would be perhaps more logical to allow a Council of some sort to exercise that right when the King has not done so. This would be more consistent with the idea of an elected King.

2nd Question. Should the principle of choices be admitted at all, or ought the succession to be by birth alone, and ought there to be some amendments to the present law or not?

3rd Question. Must this country have a parliamentary system one day, and is really the Anglo-Saxon type of parliamentary government suitable to an eastern people?

4th Question. Is this country ready to have some sort

of representative government?

5th Question. What is the best form to give to the Supreme Council? Is it worthwhile to make it a permanent institution of the country, or should it be allowed to die a natural death?

6th Question. Should we have a Prime Minister? Should this system be inaugurated now?

7th Question. Should we have a Legislative Council? What should be the constitution of such a Council?

8th Question. Have you any opinion as to our financial policy?

9th Question. Can something be done to make the Chinese become Siamese as in the old days?

In attempting to answer these questions I cannot but feel very humble. The solutions of the problems underlying the questions depend upon such an intimate knowledge of the internal affairs of Siam and of the personalities of her leaders that I cannot but recognize that there are others whose opinions must be worth far more than mine. Indeed my only excuse for venturing these opinions must be that Your Majesty has asked me to do so and that perhaps value can be found in the ideas of an impartial and detached observer whose only object is to promote the welfare of a country he loves.

The answers to the above nine questions deal with a variety of subjects and perhaps can best be answered by dealing with each subject Separately.

I. SUCCESSION OF THE THRONE

PRINCIPLE OF SUCCESSION.

In viewing these problems one must realize at the very outset that the situation in Siam is totally different from that existing in Great Britain and other similar limited Monarchies. What works well in Great Britain might work disastrously in Siam. Siam should not slavishly copy the system of any Western nation, but should evolve out of her own experience what seems best adapted to her own genius and conditions.

In Great Britain the power of the King is so much limited and attenuated and he wields so little power that if an

incompetent or corrupt King should come to the throne he could not do vital injury to the country. In Siam, on the other hand, the Monarch wields all power. In Siam if a King lacking in ability, in strength of character, or in integrity of purpose should ascend the throne, he might easily make shipwreck of the country. At the least, he would be almost sure to do it tragic injury. It is therefore infinitely more important for Siam to have a competent and strong King than for any country like England.

It would seem to follow that although a country like England can afford to fix the line of succession to the throne by an absolute principle such as primogeniture, Siam, even were such a principle practicable, cannot afford to do so. Since it is absolutely vital that Siam should have a competent and able Monarch, since the welfare of Siam so directly depends upon the degree of competency and ability of her Monarch, it seems clear that Siam's welfare vitally and directly depends upon her being able freely to select as the Monarch the ablest, the most competent and the strongest of the Royal Princes. Any law which prevents such a freedom of choice and which therefore might necessitate the crowning of an incompetent or weak Monarch because he happens to be the next in line of succession, must make against the ultimate national welfare. In England, where the Premier wields the actual power of government, no one would tolerate the idea of following a fixed line of succession for Premiers, or of adopting any system which would rob the country of its complete freedom of choice. If the King is to continue in absolute power, Siam's future welfare would seem to depend upon her being free to choose for her Monarch the best man available among the Royal Princes, regardless of rank or age; unless Siam has

this freedom she must expect to have from time to time Monarchs who are incompetent or weak, and the national interests will consequently suffer tragically. For these reasons I feel that there should be, no hard and fast law of succession based upon rank, seniority, or any other absolute principle, but rather that the choice should be left free and unhindered so long as it falls upon a Prince of Royal Blood. In order to prevent undue pretensions from these scheming for personal self advancement, it would seem wise that the choice of the heir apparent should be limited to a son of some King and of a Queen of any rank or to persons of Royal Blood; presumable the choice should not be open to some of concubines.

TIME OF CHOICE.

It would seem to me that the choice of the heir apparent should be made before the death of the King. If the choice is left until after the death of the King, there is great danger that various factions will arise each backing its own candidate, and there is always danger that this might lead to civil war. It is manifestly of the greatest importance that upon the death of the King, all the Royal Princes should be united and stand together in the choice of a successor. This could hardly be assured unless the heir apparent is chosen during the lifetime of the King.

BY WHOM THE CHOICE SHOULD BE MADE.

I feel quite strongly that the choice of the heir apparent should not be left solely to the King, but that the choice should be made by the King with the advice and consent of the Privy Council.

If the choice is made solely by the King, it seems to me that there will be a very real danger that a group of Royal Princes or Ministers may not believe in the wisdom of the King's choice, or may not concur in it. If this should be the case it would result in a lack of loyalty on the part of such Princes or ministers to the person chosen by the King; and the result upon the death of the King might be disastrous. To give a concrete illustration of that I mean, the King might designate as his successor his newly born infant son. The most patriotic and ablest of the High Princes and Ministers might feel that Siam was at the time in such a critical position that a long period of regency would spell disaster for the country, and might therefore conclude that the only patriotic thing for them to do would be to put aside the infant child and instead place upon the throne a strong and able ruler. Should a considerable faction support the infant child, civil war might result.

In other words, my feeling is that the unquestioning loyalty of the Princes and Ministers to the heir apparent upon the death of the King is absolutely vital for Siam's welfare and that the only way to insure such loyalty is to give to the Privy Council a voice in choosing the heir apparent. I therefore feel that the action of His late Majesty in claiming the right to choose his successor alone and unaided, was exceedingly unwise and should not be followed.

It would seem that this choice should be made by means of a secret ballot. If there is to be an actual freedom of choice on the part to the Privy Councillors they must be freed from the embarrassment of having to give an open and nonsecret vote possibly not in accordance with the wishes and desires of the King. The only

way to ensure real freedom of choice is by secret balloting. Presumably it should require more than a bare majority to choose the heir apparent. The concurrence of three quarters of those present within the Kingdom might well be required so as to guard against the possibility of a substantial proportion being disloyal to the heir apparent.

A further question arises as to whether the choice of heir apparent should be made by the Privy Council or by the Council of High Princes and Ministers of State. If the foregoing ideas are sound, it would seem clear that the choice should be made by the body which is most truly representative of the various and diversified interests of the Kingdom and which most nearly reflects the opinion of the controlling people. This would seem to be the Privy Council. Also, if the premier form of Government as suggested below is adopted, the choice clearly should be made by the Privy Council, for, since the Council of High Princes and Ministers of State is so small that the Ministers form a majority of the group, a scheming Premier could absolutely control the choice of the heir apparent by compelling the Ministers to vote for his own choice. This would not be possible in a body as large as the Privy Council.

PROVISIONAL NATURE OF CHOICE.

Conditions are continually changing. Children are born, boys come to age, certain individuals die, some, through the course of time prove weak or incompetent, and others gain strength and prove their worth. It therefore seems important to me that the choice

of the heir apparent should not be irrevocable. I should like to see the choice made a provisional one which could be freely changed as conditions change. I should suggest that the King and Privy Council consider the question of choosing the successor to the King afresh at intervals of every five or ten years; that at the end of every such period the new conditions should be given consideration, and the best man as viewed in the light of that time should then be chosen. This choice should be regarded in the light of a purely provisional choice rather than of an appointment. Clearly there should be no actual appointment and no official announcement should be made. Neither should additional rank be given to the person chosen. Otherwise his position should a different man later be chosen, would be too hard. The suggestion of making the choice purely a provisional one would have the additional advantage that no one could feel secure that he would ascend the throne upon the death of the existing King. The position of the heir apparent is a very difficult one. He becomes surrounded with men seeking to flatter him in order to gain his good opinion and thus to acquire power when he comes to the throne. Conditions all seem to tend in the direction of warping his character and thereby rendering him less fit later to perform his duties as King. If no one could feel secure in the position of heir apparent and if the choice were recognized as an entirely provisional one, it seems to me that it would be advantageous from the viewpoint of shaping the character of the person provisionally chosen as the heir apparent.

If the newly elected King should die before his successor has been chosen, then it would seem best to follow out the same

principles, i.e. the Privy Council should meet and choose from the Royal Princes freely and without restriction whoever seems to them best fitted and most competent to carry out the duties of the King.

The foregoing suggestions, it would seem to me, are those best calculated to secure the most competent and ablest man for the Kingship. It would probably also lessen the likelihood, of regencies which are apt to be exceedingly dangerous in a country like Siam, where absolute power is vested in the King.

Therefore, for all these reasons, my answer to the 1st. and 2nd. questions which Your Majesty proposed are as follows:

The King should have the right to choose any Royal Princes whatever as his heir, but not without the advice and consent of the Privy Council. This suggestion, as Your Majesty intimated, would be more consistent with the idea of an elected King; and it would very greatly strengthen the position and influence of the new King.

If these ideas are sound, the present law of succession should be dropped and a new fundamental law in accordance with these ideas should be framed and promulgated.

II. FRAMEWORK OF GOVERNMENT

I do not think that it is practicable to consider at this time the organization of a popular representative parliament in Siam. A workable parliament is absolutely dependent upon an intelligent electorate. Without intelligent control by the people such a body would be sure to degenerate into a corrupt and tyrannical body. Until the rank and file of people in Siam have generally received a higher of education than at present it would seem therefore to be exceedingly dangerous to try to set up a popularly controlled parliamentary body. It therefore seems inescapable that at least for the present absolute power must continue to rest in the King.

Absolute Monarchy can never be free from the great and vital danger of an incompetent or weak King. In the hands of an enlightened Monarch, such as King Chulalongkorn, rapid progress can be made and national interests can be greatly advanced; but if an incompetent or weak Monarch comes to the throne all the progress of a former reign may be lost and the country may be faced with the dire alternative of disaster or revolution. Anything which will help to prevent such disastrous abuse of power will tend to promote the ultimate welfare of the Monarchy.

Viewed from this light the system of government by a Premier would seem to have distinct advantages. In the first place, if the actual work of government is committed to a Premier, if corruption creeps into the government or if intriguers or self-interested cliques manage to obtain the reins of power, as long as the

King remains sincere and is accessible to others. The premier can always be removed and the group of intriguers upset, whereas a King cannot be removed. In other words, in every country there should always be held in reserve some power other than revolution, to remove one who proves himself in actual practice unfit for the carrying on of the government, and in a country like Siam this reserve power logically should be exercised by the King. By the transfer of the detailed work of government from the shoulders of the King to those of an appointed Premier, Siam would achieve a reserve power which would make possible through peaceful means the removal of whoever proves unfit to do the work of government; and in this way, the country would gain a guarantee against incapacity and possible tyranny on the part of the one carrying on the actual operations of government.

In the second place, the system of government by a Premier has the advantage of allowing a complete freedom in the selection of the one responsible for the carrying on of the government. The person thus selected need not be confined necessarily to Royal Blood, nor to Kingly rank, but can be selected with absolute freedom with a view solely to ability for the work of government. The work of carrying on the government may be placed upon the shoulders of whoever of all the men in the Kingdom is best fitted for the task by reason of his integrity, his strength of character, his executive capacity, and his ability to translate desired policies into practical achievement.

A third advantage of the system of Government by a Premier is that under a Premier the work of the separate Ministers can be more easily unified and co-ordinated. During the last reign one could not but feel that much was lost by a lack of co-ordination among the separate Ministers, and in those fields of work which spread beyond the sphere of any single Ministry progress was often hampered or entirely blocked. It is the duty of a Premier to formulate the general policies to be followed by the Government and to unify the work of all the separate Ministries so as to attain these desired policies. To do so the Premier must be constantly accessible to every one engaged in the work of carrying out these policies. A Premier can be thus accessible in a way which is not open to a King, many of the difficulties of the late reign were due to the fact that His late Majesty was not freely accessible to those actually carrying on the work of the government, and he therefore often made decisions based upon opinions gained from a single self-interested clique which did not make for the welfare of Siam. Because these who care most for Siam and who exercised wise judgment frequently could not reach him, he frequently failed to know the truth underlying the situations with which he dealt, and therefore acted in ignorance sometimes with regrettable results.

A fourth advantage of the system of Premier Government is that it allows a division of work. Upon the King falls the inescapable duty of performing innumerable ceremonials, all of which require time and strength. Upon the King also must fall the decision

of all questions of large national policy, - a task exacting the best of any men's time and strength. Problems involving the family affairs of the Royal Family also fall upon the King's shoulders, as well as innumerable other duties which no King can escape. These responsibilities are more than sufficient to consume the full time and strength of any one man. If to all of these is added the weighty burden of carrying on the actual work of Government and deciding the multitudinous and endless minor questions which the conduct of government unforgivingly requires, the burden becomes too great for any single man to bear. The work of actual government is strenuous and exhausting, far more so than most people realize. If all this work is thrown upon the King in addition to his other grave responsibilities and burdens, either he will break under the strain during a course of years, or else he will be compelled to neglect, through sheer physical incapacity, reading many State papers which the one responsible for the government ought to read and seeing many people which such a man ought to see. It is almost inevitable that he will, become tired and discouraged and in time fall in to the hands and under the power of an intriguing, clever group scheming for their own self-advancement instead of for the welfare of Siam. This was not true in the early days when the task of government had not assumed such large proportions as it does to-day, and when the work of government was simple & comparatively easy. As the work of government becomes more and more complex, however, the time will soon come, if it has not already done so, when no single man can possibly perform all the Ceremonials which the King must perform. properly decide large

issues of national policy, settle questions arising in the Royal Family, and in addition at the same time carry on the arduous and strenuous work of detailed government.

For all these reasons it would seem manifest that the King should be relieved from the hard work of government and that this should be instead upon the shoulders of a Premier appointed by the King. Such an arrangement does not mean that the King would be shorn of his power. The ultimate power would still rest with the King. It would mean that the King would place upon the Premier the responsibilities for carrying on the government and that the Premier would always be responsible to the King. The King would be relieved of much of the detailed burden of government; but questions of large policy would still be referred for decision to the King.

Under such a scheme it would be vital and essential that all responsibility should be concentrated in the Premier. He therefore should alone have the power of appointing the Ministers of State, who would be responsible for the conduct of the work in their Ministries directly and immediately to the Premier all questions should go from the ministries directly to the Premier. Under such a scheme it would seem vital that the King should not himself select or choose any of the Ministers. If he did so the Premier could not be made responsible for the work of the Ministers thus chosen. Responsibility in such a case would rest rather with the King; whereas the whole underlying conception of government by a Premier is

rather to concentrate responsibility in the Premier so that for any and all mistakes or errors in the work of the Ministers the King can blame and hold entirely responsible the Premier under whose control and direction the work is carried on.

There is one danger which must be faced under such a system. It is possible that the Premier might seek to absorb so much power that he would become a rival or even overshadow the King, as was the case, for example, with the Shoguns in Japan. Although this is a possible danger, I do not feel it is a very real one under the conditions existing in Siam. unless indeed the King should be so manifestly incompetent or unfit for his duties that he ought to be stripped of power. If the Premier seemed to be scheming for personal power the King could of course always remove him. If, nevertheless, such a danger were felt to real might be guarded against by various possible methods. For instance, the Ministry of War or of National Defence might be placed directly under the King and therefore made entirely independent of the Premier. In this way the King could keep direct control of the Army and see that only officers loyal to him were appointed. Under such a scheme the Ministry of War would have to be separately budgeted for and entirely separated from the other work of government. In my opinion, however, such a precaution as keeping the Army out of the control of the Premier would under the conditions now prevailing in Siam be unnecessary.

I quite realize that there are many difficulties which must be faced in creating a form of Government by a Premier. Both the conception of making the various Ministers responsible to the

Premier instead of to the King and the idea of the Premier or a Minister resigning because he personally disagrees with the policy educated by his superior although he is well qualified for his post and entirely acceptable to his superior, are quite foreign to the ideas at present generally prevailing in Siam, and would have to be developed cautiously and with care. Nevertheless, both of these ideas must be thoroughly learned before Parliamentary Government can be achieved; and if, as I hope, Siam will one day achieve some form of Parliamentary Government, these prerequisite ideas must first be mastered and generally understood by the people. If these first steps to Parliamentary Government must be mastered some day, I see no reason why they should not be mastered now.

Very much, of course, depends on personalities. Is it possible at this time to secure some one competent and willing to undertake the infinitely important task of accomplishing this transformation and carrying on the Government as Premier? The programme to be followed vitally depends upon the answer to this question.

In answer to the 3rd. and 4th. questions proposed by Your Majesty, my answer is that Siam I hope some day may have a parliamentary form of government, but that the country is not yet prepared for representative government. I believe that these who are shaping the destinies of Siam should not lose sight of a representative form of government at some future time when the spread of education makes this possible; for I believe that some such form of

Government is inevitable and desirable with the growth of education and widespread intelligence among the population. Whether or not the form of government should be the Anglo-Saxon type of parliamentary government is a question which need not be decided at this time. My own hope is that Siam will never become completely Westernized but will retain in her development her own individuality. Her institution, governmental and otherwise, should not be blindly copied from Western nations, but should be the result and out growth of her own genius and experience.

III. FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

In the 8th. question Your Majesty asks whether I have any opinion as to Siam's financial policy. Since I am not a financial expert, I think I should leave such question for the advice of a man like Sir Edward Cook, who is far better equipped than I to advise on the financial policy of Siam. Nevertheless, therefore one or two matters concerning which I feel rather strongly, but upon which because they are quite unrelated to the other subjects of this Memorandum I shall speak very briefly.

Siam, in my opinion, should not be so largely dependent upon a single crop. In the case of unfavourable weather conditions and a consequent shortage or failure to the rice crop, it means that Siam suffers unduly, and is sometimes placed in a temporarily precarious financial situation. It does not seem wise to place on one's eggs in a single basket. I therefore sometimes wonder whether Siam

ought not to take steps to engage in the cultivation of some secondary crop, such as tobacco. I have been informed that there is no reason, so far as climatic conditions are concerned, why tobacco should not be produced in Siam and that it could be produced in the off seasons between the rice crops. Why should Siam not profit, as Java has done from large tobacco crops? Not only would this diversify Siam's crops, but it would of course considerably increased the national production and the consequent revenues of the government. Similarly, there seems reasons why Siam should not grow hemp and other similar products.

Might not more assistance also be given to effects to obtain the of a more standard and better rice seed, and thus to standardize the rice produced in Siam and to improve the quality of the crop? Again, might not the fisheries be protected and the production of fish thus increased? I believe that certain kinds of fisheries are now being injured through lack of protection, with proper fish protection and an efficient Fishery Department not only could this injury be stopped but the amount of fish available for food actually increased.

The idea which I am trying to suggest is that the production of Siam should be stimulated and increased in order to increase the prosperity of the country. All this would seem largely dependent upon the efforts of the Department of Agriculture but that Department of course, is helpless to undertake such activities without adequate funds. Inasmuch as the future prosperity of Siam

depends largely upon the stimulation and increase of her agricultural resources, does it not seem that perhaps a greater proportion of the revenues of the Kingdom should be allotted to the Ministry of Agriculture than that at present allowed? Might not a similar remark be made with regard to the Ministry of Education, whose work again vitally concerns the future development of Siam? The thought in the back of my mind with regard to the question of financial policy is the fundamental problem of whether it might not be wise to reconsider afresh the proportion of revenues allotted to each Ministry in the light of the future hope of Siam.

During the year B.E. 2467 out of a total national expenditure of T cs. 96,452,497.00 the expenditure of the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture was only T cs. 4,177,709.00 and of the Ministry of Education only T cs. 2,640,344.00 Should not the allotment of revenues as between the different Ministries be freshly considered and determined more in accordance with will make for the greatest prosperity and strongest Siam of the future?

The 9 th. question which Your Majesty proposed is whether anything can be done to make the Chinese become Siamese as in the old days. This is a matter of such far reaching importance that I do not feel that I ought to venture an opinion as to it without considerably more study than that which I have been able to devote to it in the two days since Your Majesty's questions were put to me. I should like before coming to any definite conclusions to discuss further with Your Majesty certain underlying problems of policy upon which this question must ultimately depend.

In order to put into concerte shape some of the ideas which I have expressed to Your Majesty, and in compliance with Your Majesty's desire I have put into the form of a preliminary draft of a short constitution the framework of the government discussed above. I am sure that Your Majesty will understand that this is not intended in any sense as a finished document but merely as a hasity prepared starting point upon which to base later discussions.

SD/PHYA KALYAN MAITRI.
(Francis B. Sayre)

OUTLINE OF PRELIMINARY DRAFT

ARTICLE I.

The Supreme Power throughout the Kingdom shall be Vested in His Majesty the King.

ARTICLE II.

The King shall appoint a Premier who shall be responsible to the King for the entire executive work of the Government. He may be dismissed by the King at any time.

ARTICLE III.

The Premier shall appoint and may remove on his own responsibility the Ministers of State at the heads of the various Government Ministries. He shall be responsible to the King for the entire work of each Ministry. He shall also be charged with the duty of carrying out the general Policies of the Government as directed by the King and of co-ordinating for this purpose the work of the Separate Ministries.

ARTICLE IV.

Each Government Minister shall be responsible directly to the Premier for the work of his own Ministry. He shall assist in carrying out the general policies directed by the Premier.

ARTICLE V.

The Cabinet shall be called together and presided over by the Premier, and shall be composed of all the Ministers of States. It may discuss matters of common interest, but the responsibility for all decisions shall rest with the Premier.

ARTICLE VI.

The Premier will refer to the King for decision all questions of large general policy. In all matters he shall be subject to the direct control of the King

ARTICLE VII.

The King shall appoint a Supreme Council of five members. The Premier shall be a member *ex officio*, but no other Cabinet officer shall be a member. The Supreme Council shall exercise no executive power whatsoever. Its function shall consist solely in giving to the King when called upon to do so advice on questions of general policy or on questions other than the detailed executive work of the Government. It shall have no power to advise as to appointments nor as to details of administration. It shall however have the power to interpolate the Premier or any Cabinet officer.

ARTICLE VIII.

The King shall appoint and may remove at any time the members of the Privy Council.

ARTICLE IX.

Within three days of ascending the throne the heir apparent shall be provisionally chosen by the King with the advice and consent of the Privy Council. The choice shall be limited to sons of a King and a Queen or to those of Royal Blood, but shall not be otherwise limited either by rank or seniority. The choice of heir apparent shall not be irrevocable, but shall be freshly made by the King with the advice and consent of the Privy Council at the end of each five year period thereafter. (Note : Or perhaps a period longer than five years may be desired.) Should the King die before any choice has been made, the heir apparent shall be chosen immediately after the King's death by the Privy Council. In all cases three quarters of the members of the Privy Council then within the Kingdom shall be necessary to elect.

ARTICLE X.

The judicial power, subject to the supreme power of the King, shall be vested in the Supreme or Dika Court and in such inferior Courts as the King may from time to time create.

ARTICLE XI.

The supreme legislative power shall rest in the King.

ARTICLE XII.

Changes in this fundamental law may be made only by the King with the advice and consent of three quarters of the members of the Privy Council.

MEMORANDUM

1. I have carefully read His Majesty's memorandum, as well as that of Phya Kalyan. I have nothing except endorsement to express regarding H.M.'s memorandum but to P.K.'s memorandum, while admiring the exposition of his views and agreeing to in some parts, I regret to find myself differ from him in others. But time allowed to formulate my answer is short, and the handicap in my case by having to express my views in English instead of Siamese, compels me to write only briefly. However the proposals made by P.K. in his memorandum are of two kinds, namely, proposal on matters to be promulgated immediately and proposal on matters to be given further considerations. I will only comment on the former.

2. The most important proposal, as it seems to me, is to change the system of administration of the Kingdom by the appointment of a Prime Minister with the power of selection and dismissal of ministers of state, and with the sole power to formulate policy and direct the administrations of the Kingdom, subject of course to the consent of the King and the shadow of a control by the Supreme Council of State. I am bound to admit my limitations both in the studies and the Knowledge of the administrations of European countries. My impression is that a Prime Minister is indispensable in parliamentary government, but in a country where absolute monarchy prevails such as, for example, Russia, Turkey, and Persia, the system did not seem to do much good without a strong monarch, nor indeed able to save a weak monarch from his ruin. But I repeat again that I do not consider myself competent to judge matters of European nature, so I will confine my comment entirely to what I

think would effect Siam and the Siamese.

3. First of all I will consider the general impressions that it would likely make in the country, because a Prime Minister such as proposed by P.K., or indeed, a Prime Minister in the European sense, is an unknown functionary in Siam, and to create one is an innovation that would naturally give rise to all sorts of conjectures. Plausible explanation may of course be written in the preamble of the decree, but would it be possible to convince the people? The fact that the King has appointed another person, whom they do not respect as much as the King himself, to govern the country in his stead, will most naturally make them ask, Why? Is it because the King does not care to do the work as a King should do, or that the Supreme Council, seeing that the King is too weak to rule, persuaded him to appoint a Prime Minister? In either case the authority and the prestige of the King would suffer in the eyes of the people. The innovation may be applauded by some Westernized Siamese, but how many are they comparing with the whole people of Siam? In short, I am of opinion that the innovation would create a general unfavourable impression in the country. One must not forget that general impression means much in this country, as it has already proved by the result of H.M.'s first act in creating the Supreme Council of State.

4. I will now consider the likely effect that the innovation would take upon the ruling class, taking the effect already seen by the creation of the S.C.S as a standard of judgement. It would in all probability create 3 kinds of sentiment, i.e.,

(A) Those who applaud and willing to support the innovation, either by conviction, or by allowing loyalty to the King to override their conviction, and those who applaud because they

expect personal benefit from it.

(B) Those who are indifferent and scepticle, either because they have no interest of their own to concern, or being opportunists simply awaiting to profit themselves out of whatever result it may bring.

(C) Those who oppose it either by their own conviction, or by personal jealousy, or having profit or interest to loose by the innovation.

In fact no matter what system of government is adopted it can never give universal satisfaction, and there bound to be divisions of sentiment something similar to what I have said. The only thing to be hoped for is that the proportion of favourable sentiment be the majority, which I do not think would be the case in the appointment of a Prime Minister as proposed,

5. H.M. rightly stated in his memorandum that he has received deplorable inheritance when he ascended the Throne, because the authority of the sovereign had fallen much in respect and confidence, the treasury was on the verge of bankruptcy, and the government was corrupted and the services more or less in confusion. It was the master's stroke of H.M. in the creation of the S.C.S. immediately after his accession that instantly restored the general confidence in the Throne. Now let us look at the composition and the working of the S.C.S. The Council is a committee of five persons of repute and experience preside always by the King in person, and every resolution passed in the Council is executed by the King alone, no member of the Council is ever mentioned in any act, nor has any of them interfered with the work of ministerial departments, and yet accusations are not wanting, that the Council has usurped H.M.'s

authority and power, and also trying to interfere with the ministerial responsibility. I am glad indeed that H.M. himself refuted these accusations in his memorandum. But the fact that mischievous accusations are capable of being made against a Council of five persons (perhaps I may be allowed to call of high repute) is enough to make one realise what difficulties a Prime Minister alone would have to face against all sorts of intrigue, while on the other hand he is being held responsible for the good administration of the country. Here one discerns the necessity which may arise that a Prime Minister would be obliged to resort to strategems, good or bad in order to keep his position or otherwise throw up his appointment altogether.

6. Now I come to the person and the responsibility of the Prime Minister. No doubt H.M. will select the best qualified person in the Kingdom as his first Prime Minister, and let us presume that the selection meets with universal approval. The first impression created by the appointment of the Prime Minister would be that he is expected to improve the administration in such a way that will give entire satisfaction to the public. Should he fail to realise general expectations however unreasonable, he would always stand to have censures heap upon his head which would make it extremely difficult for a Prime Minister to maintain the public confidence for any length of time. Moreover the Prime Minister, however wise and able he may be, has to carry on his work with the approval of the King as well as loyal support and competent assistance of the ministers of state. How is he to be assured of it? It is indeed proposed that the Prime Minister should have the power of removal and selection of ministers. But

such powers have always been considered to belong to the king alone, and considered to be the mainstay against personal intrigue of others. It will be a great difference between the King exercising those powers in the S.C.S., and permitting the Prime Minister to exercise them with his approval. If the King's own backstair is considered obnoxious, what would it be to have another one of the Prime Minister? Let us suppose that nothing I have said would happen. Now if the Premier considers one or more ministers of state incompetent, who would he select to replace them? Naturally he would select those whom he has confidence in ability as well as loyalty towards him. Here we may discern the element of party government introduced into Siam but without parliamentary control, such element could easily tend to be a government by faction.

7. The relation between the Sovereign and the Prime Minister is also most important and most delicate matter. It would be utopian to expect that the king and the Prime Minister would always see eye to eye, or indeed that every Prime Minister would have the same degree of favour and confidence of the King. If the King wants to dismiss a Prime Minister, he would have to find convincing reason for so doing, but in the absence of parliament who is to furnish the convincing reason that protects H.M.'s decision from being considered unjust and arbitrary? The dismissed Prime Minister naturally would not proclaim his own faults, and he, being a great man, may have more or less admirers who agree with him, and here we see the element of official opposition being introduced into Siam, and again without parliamentary control. But the worse would happen when the King wants to dismiss a Prime Minister and he has the general support of the people, even in Bangkok alone.

8. There is another thing which in Siam is still different from European countries where the system of government by Prime Minister existed. In a country like England or France where government changes according to the will of parliament, or even Russia in the old days when ministers were often changed according to the will of the Monarch, in those countries they have organised departments of Civil Service in which the permanent officials run the work, the minister only directs the policy; so a change of a minister does not effect the works of the department. Now in Siam, at present at any rate, and I am of opinion that for some time to come yet, the minister is the backbone of the ministry he presides. The organisation as well as the work of a department are still visibly effected by the competency of the minister. That is why even without constant changes of the minister it is difficult to find a real competent man as head of a ministerial department. If a ministerial post becomes unpermanent before a thorough organisation is made in the ministries in the same way as in European countries, I am afraid local discipline will also break down, and because in stead of looking to one chief all the time, speculation as to a coming chief would constantly arise. It may be argued that the Prime Minister is expected to cure all those imperfections, but from the nature of things existing in this country as aforesaid, can one man do it? It may be argued again that the answer could be known only if we give the idea a trial. But why run the risk of a trial for the sake of an idea when there is no necessity.

9. I do not wish it to be understood that I think parliamentary government and the system of government by having a Prime Minister are for ever unfit for Siam. I only maintain that both are unfit and undesirable in the condition and circumstances which now exist

in Siam, and the result would be disastrous even if the system of government by a Prime Minister alone is adopted now. What Siam urgently wants at the present moment is to remedy the evils existed before H.M. came to the Throne, and to organise an efficient administration of the Kingdom before anything else. In this respect H.M. himself has done a great act, which can never be overpraised, by the creation of the S.C.S., and himself working with it loyally and arduously with the satisfactory results, that confidence in the government has been re-established, and the national budget balanced, and put a stop to official embezzlement and irregularities by removing undesirables from offices and putting in competent men to do the work of reorganisation of the administrations. One should not forget that all the good works accomplished by H.M. was done within the last ten months, and there are many more works to be done, and "Rome was not built in a day". Even if the innovation is introduced I doubt whether it can accomplish more rapidly, not to say, or better. I am an old man and may be considered naturally conservative, but with sincere conviction I beg leave to ask that what fault or drawback the present system has shown, so as to endanger the safety or retard the progress of Siam, if it is allowed to continue? Is there any apparent and convincing necessity which requires radical modification? If the benefit of the present system is found to exist no longer or has been compromised, I do not think any member of S.C.S. would hesitate to remedy it even with its own desolution, but if the S.C.S. is still considered useful, I beg to warn that the appointment of a Prime Minister as proposed, and no matter what the proposal may provide for, the S.C.S., is bound to be extinguish the S.C.S. in so far as its usefulness is concerned even with the life-time of the old men who now serve in it.

10. H.M. has done me a great and gratifying honour by mentioning my name in his memorandum among the first and firm supporters of his idea in the creation of the S.C.S. I did so because I was absolutely convinced that such council alone would be practicable for the successful administration of Siam under the present circumstances. If I remember rightly I have also expressed my opinion to H.M. even then, I do not think a system of government by Prime Minister would do in Siam. It was therefore a sort of pride and satisfaction to me to see the results of H.M.'s creation of the S.C.S., because it made me feel that I was not wrong in giving him my support, and I wish H.M. to know that it was a real pleasure to me when sitting in the Council to see and feel that everyone of its members from the King downwards discard all personal ambitions and work together solely for the benefit of Siam.

11. As regards the impracticability of having a parliamentary government in Siam till the people are sufficiently educated to understand their responsibility in the election, I entirely agree with P.K. and think that he is absolutely right. I would only add that either when the institution of the S.C.S. is found wanting in usefulness, or when the time approaches that H.M. is considering the creation of the parliamentary government, then the question of government by Prime Minister should be taken up for consideration.

12. As regards making municipal institution, the starting point for representative government I need not comment in this memorandum, because it was also a subject which I agreed with and supported H.M.'s idea before he came to the Throne just the same as I have supported his idea of the creation of the S.C.S.

1st. August 1926.

SUFFRAGE FOR SIAM IS PLANNED BY KING TO TEST DEMOCRACY HIS BROTHER DIES IN PARIS

But King Orders Suspension of Mourning-Party Leaves for
Washington Today

By **HAROLD N. DENNY.**

Special to The New York Times.

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y., April 27. — King Prajadhipok of Siam, one of the three absolute monarchs in the world, sat at his ease in his private study at Ophir Hall today and told a small group of newspaper representatives his conception of his relationship to his people and his plans for their development.

The interview, the first he has granted since he ascended the throne in 1926, was concluded only a short time before news of a bereavement reached the King and brought gloom to the entire royal party. This eveing the King received a cablegram informing him that his half-brother, Prince Chandaburi, a member of the Supreme Council of State, had died in Paris.

It was announced that court mourning will be observed in Bangkok but that the King — as is customary in cases of functions of state — has ordered the suspension of mourning for his visit to Washington and on the occasions of subsequent engagements. The royal party is scheduled to leave for Washington tomorrow.

At the time of the interview the King did not know of the death and the interview was remarkable both for its scope and the astuteness with which the monarch discussed problems of government.

Believes in Fatherly Rule.

He revealed himself as a classical example of the "benevolent despot," ruling

his people wisely as a father rules his children, believing that the highest aim of government is the happiness of the greatest number, repudiating the concept of the divine right of kings and the word "subjects" as applied to his people.

The King also took occasion in the interview to make an announcement of extraordinary importance to the future of his realm. He, almost the last of the rulers in the ancient tradition, is planning voluntarily to restrict his authority by degrees through the granting of suffrage to his people, with the ultimate object of establishing representative government in Siam when the people are trained to it. This will be brought about first by allowing the people to vote on municipal officials.

One of the objects of the King's present journey in America, it developed, is to see how democracy functions.

"I am most interested in the working of the franchise," he said. "I want to see whether voting really expresses the will of the majority. I want to learn about the form of voting and how your political campaigns are conducted, and so on. These things interest me a great deal".

Interview Very Informal.

The interview was carried on with complete informality, at the suggestion of the King, and was marked by unusual intimacy and cordiality because, by reason

of the King's health, the number of interviewers was restricted to four.

The King met the press representatives at 3 o'clock in the sitting room of Mrs. Whitelaw Reld's estate, four miles from here. This sitting room, a vast hall on the second floor overlooking the rolling lawns of the estate, and magnificent with tapestries and paintings, is the general lounging room of the royal party. Two young boys of the Siamese party were playing in the billiard room down the corridor. Queen Rambaibarni, in warm, soft brown, sat at one side with her mother, Princess Svasti.

Prince Svasti elderly, genial and shrewd, first received the members of the press as they were presented by Ralph Hayes, secretary of the Committee of American Friends of Siam. The Princess in turn presented them to his Majesty. King Prajadhipok returned their bows and shook hands with each, immediately establishing the note of dignified democracy which characterized the whole meeting.

The King was dressed entirely in brown, with a perfectly tailored lounge suit of Donegal tweed, a soft-collared shirt and a knitted vest.

"Shall we go into my study?" he asked, when the presentations were completed.

He led the way into a small library opening off the sitting room, motioned the interviewers to seats and sat down with knees comfortably crossed alongside a huge fireplace of carved wood.

Then he suggested that the affair be entirely informal and the conversation began. It became evident immediately that the scope of the King's interests and knowledge is extraordinary, for the conversation roamed from the philosophy of

government to the King's desire to see Babe Ruth knock out home runs, from Charlie Chaplin's genius to religious freedom in Siam. The King was intensely alert and his flashing eyes gave no hint of the ailment for which his left eye will be operated upon next week. He batted back his answers to the questions as if he enjoyed it thoroughly and smiled and laughed repeatedly.

There was humor besides what the interview itself afforded. The conversation was interrupted by a wrong-number telephone call. Hardly had the conversation begun when the phone at the King's elbow began to ring insistently. Mr. Hayes picked up the receiver and answered.

"Is this the garage?" demanded a harsh voice at the other end. "No." said Mr. Hayes. This is his Majesty's study."

The King joined—in the smile.

Questions Sent in Advance.

The newspaper representatives, eager to hear the King's views on government, had prepared several questions and had them submitted to the King in advance. After the interview it was learned that one court official had felt that the questions might embarrass the King, but Prince Svasti looked them over laughed and said. "Oh, they're all right. He'll answer them."

So the first question asked of the King was this.

Will your Majesty discuss your principles of government, from the point of view of an absolute monarch devoted to the welfare of his subjects?"

"In the first place." the King responded, in perfect and fluent English with

little accent, "in Siam the King doesn't recognize in himself any divine right. From olden times the King of Siam has been the father of his people. In fact, the old word for King, chosen when the people won their independence and adopted the name 'Thai' 'Free' for themselves, was 'Father of the country. Perhaps you would like the Siamese for that. It is Po Muang.

"That has always been the concept in Siam—that the King is the father of his people and that he treats them as children rather than as subjects. Indeed, 'subjects' is not quite the right word."

The monarch went on to discuss the functions of his office impersonally, talking of "the King" in the third person as any professor of political economy might in addressing a class.

"The duties of the King, of course, are to help the people; to govern them in such a way as to make them happy. The King, like the father in a patriarchal family, is to be obeyed. That is the relationship like a father and his son. The father advises the son what is the right thing to do and he expects the son to obey.

"The obedience that the King receives is the obedience of love, not of fear. It is quite without discipline. And I assure you that it works like that in Siam, even in this modern day."

The King was asked what he considered was the highest aim of government.

"The aim of government is to promote the happiness of the greatest number of people," the King replied. "We cannot aim perhaps for the happiness of everybody. That would be impossible. But we can aim for the happiness of the greatest number."

One question, which had been framed with some misgivings, was as to whether

the individual might not enjoy more freedom under a monarchy, with only one ruler, than in a democracy, with many rulers. The King perhaps felt that as guest of a democracy he should not discuss that.

"The best form of government," he said tactfully, "is the one which suits the people who live under it."

The King entered upon a discussion of American industry and invention in answering a query as to what interested him most in America.

"I am interested most," he said, "in American scientific discoveries and mechanical inventions. I am very keen to see some of your big industrial concerns, such as the General Electric Company's plant at Schenectady, and the Ford plant. I shall try to arrange something like that further on.

"I am deeply interested in the mechanical progress of America and its labor-saving devices, which make living more easy and comfortable."

He said in answer to a question that he might introduce such devices in Siam, but added that Siam already had adopted many of them.

As the King spoke, his manner revealed affection for his people and pride in their qualities. He spoke of the Westernization of Siam and told why he believed it had given Siam many benefits without undermining Siam's native culture.

"Our slogan is 'to adapt, not to adopt,'" he said with a smile.

"The Siamese are an adaptable people. They accept new ideas readily, but, at the same time, they do not let go of the old. They are very good at combining the ideals of the West and the East. The modern ideas that they have received have

not changed the relationship of the King and his people, and that relationship is good for Siam.

"When ideas are presented to us we pick and choose what is best for us instead of adopting them wholesale. We have done that with Western science and education with great success. Bangkok is a mixture of the Orient and the West. It is a blend that is happy."

The conversation drifted on to religion. He explained that in his youth he, like other young men, had served as a Buddhist monk for four months, becoming adept in his religion.

"One of our principles is that we do not say that one religion is better than another," he said. All religions are the same. We do not look down upon any religion. We allow our people to choose the religion they like best.

"Our conception of religion is to teach people to do good. It does not matter what one calls the God in whose name one does good. Western influence accords well with Buddhism."

King Prajadhipok has done much to Westernize the educational system of Siam and he expressed the belief that Western influence had had only a good effect in his country.

"It opens up the people's minds," he said. "They want to know all about new Western ideas and inventions. We advise them to meditate over these new ideas and not adopt them unless they are sure they will be beneficial, and that is what they do."

The Westernizing process had resulted in the women of Siam adopting costumes more like those of European women and even of bobbing their hair.

"But that has been a success, too," said the King, laughing heartily. "It is becoming to them. They look pretty. So altogether the Western influence has been good."

King Prajadhipok told of the interest the Siamese took in American motion pictures and laughed in pleasant retrospect over Charlie Chaplin in "City Lights," which he saw in his own private motion picture theatre at Ophir Hall.

He was drawn into a description of the government of Siam and disclosed that his brother, Prince Paribatra, who is governing the kingdom in his absence, would make a full report to him each month while the King is in America and that the King himself would make the decisions and govern by cable whenever problems of importance outside the routine arose. This Summer he hopes to converse with his brother in Bangkok by wireless telephone.

Explains Judicial System.

The King told in considerable detail of the judicial system, with its appellate and supreme courts, much like our own, except that there is no trial by jury, and said that, although in theory all justice derived from the King and that he could set aside any judicial decision, he almost invariably accepted the court's action. He told how Siam is divided into provinces, each ruled by a governor appointed by the King, and of how these provinces in turn are divided into departments. Large centres have municipal governments. Then he disclosed his plans for the granting of suffrage to his people.

"We are planning a new municipal law to experiment with the franchise," he said. "Under this law the people

would be permitted to elect some of their municipal councilors. It is not yet a law, you understand. It is just a project now.

"It is my opinion that the beginning of suffrage should be in the municipalities. I believe that the people should have a voice in local affairs. We are trying to educate them up to it.

"I think it would be a mistake for us to have parliamentary government until the people have learned to exercise the franchise through experience in local government.

This granting of political rights to his subjects was to be on his own initiative, the King made clear.

"In Siam," he explained, "any new movement must come from above, not by pressure from below."

King Prajadhipok expressed great gratitude to the United States for having taken the initiative in abandoning its extraterritorial privileges in Siam in 1920 and revising the treaty by which Siam was limited to charging an import tariff of 3 per cent. This example was followed by the European nations.

"All Siamese are grateful to America," he said, "for being the first to grant us our freedom."

The King declined to discuss American women, remarking that he did not know anything about them, but he volunteered that the women of Siam were free — not confined to their homes as are the women of so many Oriental countries, and that Siamese girls were studying in the law and medical schools of Bangkok. He told of Siam's excellent railroad system and its great progress in aviation, of a new prison being built according to the best

Western standards, of merciful treatment of criminals and of Siam's freedom from the increase of crime which has afflicted the rest of the world in recent years. He expressed keen interest in many phases of American life.

Likes American Football.

"After my operation, if it is successful," he said, "we probably shall go to New York and visit the theatres. I wish to see a baseball game, too. I would like to see Babe Ruth play. I prefer American football as a game, but this is not the season, is it?"

The interview ended and the King bowed his visitors from the study. Prince Svasti was awaiting them in the sitting room and he chatted agreeably of many things, including the two other absolute monarchies — those of Abyssinia and Afghanistan.

Queen Rambaibarni and her mother meanwhile were seated on a great divan. The King strolled in and rejoined the party. Prince Svasti presented the reporters to the Queen and her mother. The Queen, poised but with a hint of shyness in her mien, wore a nut — brown silk ensemble, with a long, full skirt and a short jacket. She is reputed to be one of the most beautiful women in the Orient and she is charming as well.

She, too, returned the bows of the reporters and extended her hand. She had been looking out across the windswept lawn.

"It's bad golfing weather," she observed

Her mother, Princess Svasti, received the presentations with the same poised modesty. She has been suffering from a cold, from which she is almost recovered, but the Queen remarked that Prince

Amoradat Kridakara. Siamese Minister to Washington, was ill of cold today.

"We've been having quite an epidemic," the King commented.

The newspaper representatives wished the King a speedy and complete recovery from the cataract which is threatening his left eye, and hoped that the King and Queen both would enjoy their visit in America.

Prince Svasti accompanied them to the main floor of the huge house.

"You know, we like being in America," he said. "We have a feeling that Americans regard us affectionately."

Formal Statement Issued.

Before he bade the reporters farewell, Prince Svasti presented to them a formal statement issued by the King commenting on American newspapers. It was as follows :

"One of the outstanding impressions received by any visitor to the United States is that of an omnipresent if not always omniscient - press. Everywhere and immediately the power and virility of your press are obvious. More, perhaps, than in any other country, newspapers and periodicals are an important factor in affecting the daily life of the nation and in directing the current of public opinion.

"Possibly I should not confess that the Queen and I have been greatly interested in, and sometimes not a little amazed at, the sheaves of cuttings that have been presented to us in recent days. We have been astonished by their number, by the research they involve and, occasionally, by the wealth of fanciful detail they contain !

"For the kindly and hospitable attitude of the press we are more grateful than

we can say. In that we find a reflection of the friendliness toward my country that has been so happily evident since we have crossed your border. And if I may venture, as has been suggested, to leave a word with you, it is a hope that you may build even more firmly upon the strong foundation you have; that this free press that has developed in America may contrive not merely to record contemporary happenings with accuracy and good taste, but to constitute as well an instrumentality that will, in ever greater degree, make for understanding and tolerance and, at last, peace among the nations."

While members of the Siamese royal party were busy with their preparations for the trip to Washington tomorrow, in the course of which they will exchange formal State calls. Westchester County residents were perfecting plans for the official reception at White Plains next Saturday.

It could not be learned tonight whether the death of King Prajadhipok's brother would interfere with the White Plains reception and the one scheduled for New York City May 4, although it was definitely announced that the Washington reception would be held as planned.

Mayor Frederick C. McLaughlin of White Plains announced the personnel of several subcommittees to assist the general reception committee, composed of James B. Thomas, Henry R. Barrett and Reginald P. Ray. They are as follows :

Police and Military Committee - Captain Herbert J. Lucas, chairman; Captain Sylvanus Purdy, aide.

Finance Committee - J. Crawford Stevens, chairman; John Burling, H. B. Vincent, Harry S. Hamilton, John F. Krepps and Archibald K. Bowes.

Ushers Committee – Thomas J. Foley, chairman : John W. Lumbard, H. Claude Hardy, Loren S. Spoor, H. C. Atwater, Nelson E. Schmidt and Matthew E. Lynaugh.

Music Committee – J. Dale Diehl and Mrs. Caroline Beeson Fry, co – chairmen.

Construction Committee – Frank S. Bache.

Floral Committee – Mrs. Albert D. Frost,

president of the Contemporary Club.

Decorations Committee – John Rosch, chairman.

Press Committee – Walter V. Hogan and Charles B. Forbes.

The reception is scheduled to begin at 3 : 30 P.M. Saturday in the stadium of the White Plains High School.

copy

AN OUTLINE OF CHANGES IN THE FORM OF THE GOVERNMENT

There is submitted herewith, in accordance with the wish of His Majesty, an outline of a new constitution, together with a brief explanation.

In general the plan involves the beginning of a parliamentary form of government. In theory His Majesty still remains the Chief Executive and Law-giver. As Chief Executive, however, He acts through a Prime Minister who is responsible to His Majesty for the administration of the Government. The Prime Minister and Cabinet is under the plan also subject to certain supervisory powers of the Legislative Council.

His Majesty as Law-giver will act with the aid of the Legislative Council composed in a substantial part of elected representatives.

It is not assumed that the plan presented herewith is either complete or perfect. It is put forth as a basis for consideration and is limited to certain main principles. Obviously many details would have to be worked out later.

The Government under this proposal would be as follows :-

- (a) The Monarch.
- (b) Supreme Council.
- (c) Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- (d) Legislative Council

SUPREME COUNCIL

The Supreme Council will be retained with certain modifications. It should be a small body of not more than 6, and shall be appointed by His Majesty. The term of office shall be as at present - during His Majesty's pleasure - and not for a fixed period.

The Supreme Council should act purely as an advisory body to His Majesty on matters of general policy.

No member of the Supreme Council shall at the same time serve as Prime Minister or member of the Cabinet. Furthermore the Council shall not sit with the Cabinet.

If members of the Cabinet may also serve as members of the Supreme Council the influence and position of the Prime Minister might be seriously weakened.

PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

Appointment.

The Prime Minister shall be selected by His Majesty and shall be responsible to His Majesty for the administration of the Government.

There should be no limitation upon the King's power of selection. He should be free to select the most capable man for the position without regard to any factors except his qualifications for the Office.

If the Prime Minister is to be responsible for the administration of the Government he should have the right to choose his Cabinet Ministers. A complete delegation to the Prime Minister of the power of appointment would be however too drastic a change. It is therefore suggested that the choice of the Prime Minister should be subject to confirmation by His Majesty.

Term of Office.

The Prime Minister and Cabinet members shall be appointed for a fixed period and at the expiration thereof their resignation must be offered to His Majesty. They should however be eligible to re-appointment. The term of office should be the same as that for the Legislative Council, so that a new Council and a new Prime Minister and Cabinet or a re-appointed Prime Minister and Cabinet should come into office at the same time. This plan would permit Changes to be made as a matter of course and without compelling His Majesty to exercise his sovereign power of removal. His Majesty would also have the right at any time to request the resignation of the Prime Minister. Whenever the Prime Minister resigns, either voluntarily or on request, the members of his Cabinet shall also tender their resignations.

The Prime Minister shall preside over Cabinet meeting and will ordinarily be the sole means of communication between His Majesty and the Cabinet.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Composition.

The Legislative Council should be large enough to be representative of the public. On the other hand it should not, at the beginning, be too large, since a numerous body is unwieldy and slow to act.

It is suggested that the Council should be not more than 75 or less than 50.

The Legislative Council may be composed entirely of appointed members or solely of elected members or of a combination of the two. A purely appointed Council would not have sufficient independence and would not be considered by the public as representative. On the other hand a Council composed entirely of elected members might not have sufficient number of persons of experience and judgement in public affairs. It is therefore suggested that at the start the Legislative Council should be equally divided between appointed members.

Of the members appointed by His Majesty not more than half should be at the same time Government officials. With this limitation His Majesty should be free to select such members as he deems fit.

The Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet shall be members of the Legislative Council ex-officio.

If the Legislative Council is to exercise some power of supervision over the administration, together with the right to pass a

vote of lack of confidence, it is essential that the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet should have at least the right to sit and speak in the Council. Whether they should also have the right to vote is a debatable question. If the underlying purpose is eventually to establish a Parliamentary Government, then these executives should be full-fledged members of the Council.

Election and Qualifications of Voters.

The method of election shall be indirect, that is, the voters of each Amphur shall choose electors who will meet together and elect by ballot the representatives for the Monthon. Since the Amphur districts vary in population from 70 thousand to as low as 3, 4 and 5 thousand the number of electors must be based on population.

Voters must be nationals and reside in the Amphur or Amphurs where the voting takes place. They must also pay a certain amount of tax.

The Monthons, of which there are ten, also vary in population from Nakorn Rajasrima with 2,800,000 to Phuket with only 24,000. The number of representatives from the Monthons should also vary according to the population in order that the Legislative Council may approximate a truly representative body.

The election of the members of the Council shall be by majority vote. In case any Monthon fails to elect its representative or representatives His Majesty shall fill the vacancy by appointment.

Qualifications of members of the Council.

They must be Siamese nationals and at least 30 years of age, able to read and write and must pay a certain amount of tax. No elected member shall at the same time hold any other Government position.

Term of Office and Meetings.

Members of the Legislative Council should be elected for a fixed period of either 4 or 5 years. This term should be the same as that fixed for the period of office for the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The Legislative Council should meet at least once each year. It may be called in a special session at any time by His Majesty and may also be dissolved by His Majesty.

FUNCTIONS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

1. Legislative

All laws proposed by the Prime Minister must be submitted to the Council for its approval. The Council may adopt amendments or alterations. Furthermore the Council may initiate legislation.

The Budget shall be submitted to the Council by the Prime Minister. In case of disagreement between the Council and the Prime Minister over the Budget the matter shall be referred to His Majesty.

Treaties and agreements or arrangements with Foreign Powers do not have to be submitted to the Council.

His Majesty has power of veto on any legislation approved by the Council. Furthermore His Majesty may in any emergency or whenever in His opinion the public interest or security requires it, enact legislation without reference to the Legislative Council. In case of any veto His Majesty shall in a message to the Council set forth the reasons for His action.

2. Administrative.

The Council may interpellate the Ministers on any matters affecting the Government. The Ministers are bound to give

explanation unless incompatible with public interest.

The Council may, by 2/3 majority, pass a vote of lack of confidence in the Prime Minister. In such case the Prime Minister and Cabinet must tender their resignations to His Majesty. His Majesty may accept or refuse to accept as he deems proper in the public interest.

3. Organisation.

The Council may select its own presiding officer and shall adopt rules for its deliberation and work.

Ordinarily all meetings of the Council shall be in public. The Council may, however, by a majority vote, go into executive session which shall be secret.

RBS : SP

8.12.74

MEMORANDUM
CONCERNING THE PROPOSED CHANGES
IN THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT

I have doubts whether it is advisable to adopt in its entirety the proposed plan for a new constitution. I express these views with some diffidence as I fully realise that my knowledge of the Siamese people is limited. On the other hand I have had a long experience with popular government. I am not one of those who believe that unlimited monarchy should continue to exist indefinitely in Siam. The time will undoubtedly come when some distribution of power will have to be made. I do not believe however that time has yet arrived.

There is one marked difference between the two important aspects of the proposed plan :- The creation of a Prime Minister and the creation of a Legislative Council with both legislative and administrative functions. While the creation of a Prime Minister would be an important change it cannot be deemed fundamental. At present His Majesty is His own Prime Minister and exercises His power as Chief Executive through responsible minister. The experiment of a Prime Minister can be tried without serious consequences even if it should prove unsuccessful.

The creation of a Legislative Council with a substantial number of elected members exercising both legislative and executive functions is of quite a different category. It is extremely difficult to withdraw political power once granted to the people.

As a rule such organisations when once created tend inevitably to acquire more power. Accordingly such experiments should not be made until it is clear that, in the words of Lord Bacon, "The necessity be urgent or the utility evident" I do not believe a Legislative Council would render the Government of Siam more efficient or wiser than the present Government. Also I do not believe a desire for some form of popular government is widespread among the people.

It is true that a period of depression such as now exists in Siam always creates some re-action against the Government in power. However, His Majesty's Government is not responsible for the economic depression. Since in large measure the present unrest is due to economic reasons and not because of dissatisfaction with the form of Government it is not advisable to attempt to allay that unrest through changes in the constitution.

In stating the opinion that the greater part of the Siamese people are not yet fit to take part in the national Government I would not be understood as casting reflections on the natural capacity of the Siamese race as compared with the Burmese or other Eastern races where elected Legislative Councils now exist. In fact the capacity of the Siamese for government has been amply shown by the achievements of the Royal Family and officials of the Government. The situation in Burma is fundamentally different from the situation in Siam. Burma for many generations has been ruled by an alien power. Naturally there exists in Burma a wide-spread feeling against English rule. Siam has been, on the other hand, always ruled by its own people and the Siamese people have been loyal to their rulers.

Furthermore in Burma the people have had political training through their participation in local Government for many years before the creation of the Legislative Council. In Siam so far there is no form of real local self government. The best method of training a people for self government is to give them first some control over and responsibility for their local interests with which they are in direct contact.

I would suggest as a safe source that the changes to be made in the immediate future in Siam should be restricted to the creation of a Prime Minister with a fixed term and creation of municipal governments and that the question of the establishment of a Legislative Council should be deferred.

(Signed) **Raymond B. Stevens**
Office of the Adviser in Foreign Affairs,
9th March, 1932.

RBS : SP

MEMORANDUM

1. In compliance with the Royal Command, a plan for the institution of government by Prime Minister and for the establishment of a Legislative Council has been drawn up.

Owing to the limited time at our disposal, this plan has been worked out with a certain element of haste and there is no pretension that it is perfect or final.

2. In practice it will be found that the success of the plan would entirely depend upon the question of personnel. This is all the more so in the case of the Prime Minister and the cabinet. The choice of the Prime Minister is of extreme importance.

3. The establishment of a Legislative Council, however, implies a very fundamental change in the present constitution. It constitutes a first step towards parliamentary government, and when once it is set up, the tendency will naturally be to extend its activities and increase its power.

4. Is the present an opportune time to effect a fundamental change in the constitution?

There is at present a feeling of dissatisfaction prevailing amongst a certain class of people, brought about primarily by the

world economic depression. In order to meet the financial situation the government has been reluctantly compelled to make drastic cut in government expenditure and to impose new emergency taxes. These measures will to a certain extent increase the feeling of discontent with the government. In these circumstances there are rumours current that there will be an attempt to overthrow the government at some future occasion. Although some of the rumours appear to be wild and unreliable, yet it would be wise for the government to be prepared for all eventualities. In time like this, it is imperative that there should be a feeling of confidence and unity amongst all the members of the government. There should be no change which would weaken the power of the government.

The answer to the question raised at the beginning of this paragraph is that much depends upon the effect of the change that is proposed. Until the present financial crisis is over, no change in the constitution should be adopted which would have the effect of weakening the power of the government.

5. In order to ensure the satisfactory working of a Legislative Council, it is essential that the members of the Council should possess a certain amount of training in the work which is to be entrusted to them. In this respect the experience of our neighbours may be of interest to us. Both in India and Burma, no Legislative Council was set up until the inhabitants have had some local training in self government. The best training for local self government would seem to be the establishment of municipalities in the more advanced parts of the country. In the case of Burma municipalities

were set up as early as 1884, but the present Burma Legislative Council was not set up till 1923.

In the case of Siam, a law for the setting up of municipalities has now been drafted. It is respectfully submitted that the draft law should be examined and, if found agreeable, should be adopted and put into force. This will enable the local communities to gain some experience in self government. When sufficient experience has been gained in this way, a Legislative Council could be set up with a certain measure of confidence that it will function well and wisely.

Saranromya Palace
Bangkok 9th March, 1932.

(Signed) Phya Srivisar.

