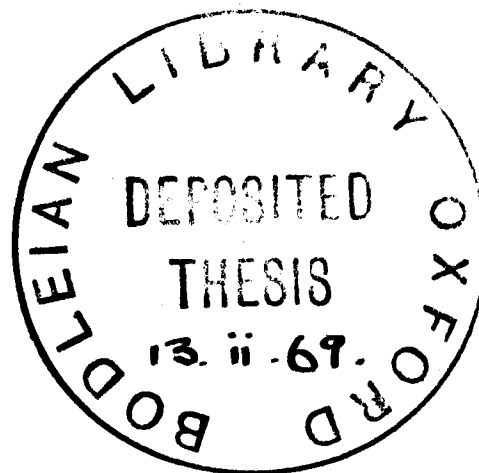


ABSTRACT

THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF SIAM FROM 1892 TO 1915:
A STUDY OF THE CREATION, THE GROWTH, THE ACHIEVEMENTS,
AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR MODERN SIAM,
OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR UNDER
PRINCE DAMRONG RACHANUPHAP.

by
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Modern History

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Kingdom of Siam's territorial integrity and independence were threatened by the great imperial Powers of France and Great Britain. In the course of the century and in the first decade of the twentieth century, Siam conceded extraterritorial rights, gave fiscal concessions, lost some of her territories to the two Great Powers, but maintained her independence. She owed her survival as an independent nation, on the one hand, to her distant position from the major trade routes of the period and to the rivalry between France and Great Britain, and, on the other hand, to her accommodating diplomacy and to the modernization of her government and administration. This Thesis examines one aspect of Siam's modernization of her government and administration namely the creation, the growth, and the achievements of the Ministry of the Interior under Prince Damrong Rachanuphap between 1892 and 1915.

The subject of the modernization of the Ministry of the Interior was chosen because it makes a contribution to the knowledge of the history of Siam. It is concerned with Siam's internal politics in both its metropolitan and provincial settings. It also deals with much of Siam's external politics in the nineteenth century and in the first decade of the twentieth century. The main body of the Thesis is a detailed examination of Siam's traditional provincial administration,

its gradual reform in the 1870s and 1880s, the creation of the centralized system of provincial administration known as the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration between 1892 and 1899, and its implementation and development between 1899 and 1915. This Thesis is occupied not only with the provincial but also with other branches of the administration. The Ministry of the Interior had during this period subsidiary departments, namely the Forestry, Mines, Provincial Gendarmerie, Provincial Revenue, Health, and Provincial Criminal Investigation Departments. It also helped to extend the work of the Ministries of Education, Defence, and Agriculture into the provinces.

The subject of the modernization of the Ministry of the Interior was also chosen because it bears some relation to problems of more general historical interest. The survival of Siam as an independent nation thanks partly to the reform of her government and administration is related to the question of the modernization and westernization of non-European countries in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The Thesis attempts to analyse the internal and external forces which caused Siam to reform her government and administration. At the same time, it tries to detect the traditional western elements in the various schemes of modernization. In this way, the Thesis might ultimately be of some use to comparative studies of modernization and westernization between non-European

nations such as between Siam and Japan.

The treatment is original inasmuch as it is the first time that archival sources have been used in the study of this subject. Hitherto, the best studies of the subject such as Detchard Vongkomolshet's 'The Administrative, Judicial, and Financial Reforms of King Chulalongkorn 1868-1910' (Cornell Univ. M.A. thesis 1958) and Chakkrit Noraniti-phadungkan's Somdet Phrachao Borommawongthoe From Phraya Damrong Rachanuphap Kap Krasuang Mahatthai, Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and the Ministry of the Interior (Bangkok, 1963) have used only published sources such as printed documents, official journals, and memoirs. These works are also limited by a legalistic approach which concentrates on the declaration of intentions rather than on an investigation of the implementation of the edicts and regulations in the field.

The Thesis tries to show that there was a great deal of discrepancy between the government's ideals and their practical fulfilment. This disparity existed both before and after the reform of the government and the administration in the 1880s and 1890s. On the one hand, it seems, for instance, that traditional Siamese government and administration worked quite differently in theory and in practice in both their metropolitan and provincial settings. On the other hand, it appears that, as far as the Ministry of the Interior was concerned, the promulga-

tion of reforms in the 1880s and 1890s did not entail their immediate fulfilment. The Ministry faced active opposition and passive resistance to the modernization of the provincial administration. The government's lack of money also meant that it suffered from a scarcity of professional civil servants which in turn resulted in a lack of leadership and efficiency in the implementation of reforms in every sphere and at every level of the provincial administration.

The Thesis ends by asking the reader to treat the Siamese government and administration according to their contemporary terms. The traditional government and administration, although they worked quite differently in theory and in practice, were not only capable of managing internal politics but also of executing ambitious external policies. The Ministry of the Interior, in spite of the disparity between the declaration of intentions and the implementation of reforms, did manage to overcome active and passive opposition and to lay the foundation for a centralized system of provincial administration. Although its success did perhaps imply that Siamese administration became somewhat over-centralized and over-bureaucratized, the Ministry did try to forestall and to remove these drawbacks by laying at the same time the foundation for self-government at the village and municipal levels. Finally, the Thesis pays tribute to Prince Damrong Rachanuphap who helped to create, to lead, and

to inspire the Siamese Ministry of the Interior from 1892 to 1915.

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Preface.

This attempt to write the history of the Ministry of the Interior between 1892 and 1915 originated in the wish to examine one aspect of Siam's modernization of her government and administration in the belief that it was one of the factors which helped that country to survive as an independent nation in an age of European imperialism.

I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge my obligations to previous works on this subject. Detchard Vongkomolshet's 'The Administrative, Judicial, and Financial Reforms of King Chulalongkorn 1868-1910' (Cornell Univ. M.A. thesis 1958) introduced me to the period in the earliest stage of my research. Chakkrit Noranitiphadungkan's Somdet Phrachao Borommawongthoe Krom Phraya Damrong Rachanuphap kap Krasuang Mahatthai, Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and the Ministry of the Interior (Bangkok, 1963) later indicated the general line of approach to the subject. David K. Wyatt's 'The Beginnings of Modern Education in Thailand, 1868-1910' (Cornell Univ. Ph.D. thesis 1966) was a model study of a parallel subject which showed me the real problems of the period.

I would also like to thank the following librarians and archivists for helping me to find the material for this Thesis: Miss Anne Abley of St. Antony's College, Oxford, Mr. Adrian Roberts of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Mr. Eric Grinstead of

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Abbreviations.

JSS Journal of the Siam Society.

RKB Ratchakitchanubeksa. The Royal Gazette

Transliterations.

The transliteration of Thai into Roman script follows the General System recommended by the Royal Institute of Thailand in 'Notification of the Royal Institute concerning the transcription of Thai characters into Roman', Journal of the Thailand Research Society (i.e. the Journal of the Siam Society), xxxiii pt. 1 (1941) 49-65.

Chapter I

The Kingdom of Siam before 1892.

The last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of this century marked a period of great reforms in the history of the Kingdom of Siam. The period spanned two reigns, that of King Chulalongkorn, who reigned from 1868 to 1910, and that of King Wachirawut, from 1910 to 1925. Siam in 1925 was vastly different from what she was like in 1868. From a loose conglomeration of states and provinces without clear boundaries, she became a smaller and more compact state with a clearly defined frontier. During the same period, her people were emancipated from semi-vassalage and slavery and her central government was modernized.

The most active period of reforms started in 1892. In that year, Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, a young man of thirty, became Minister of the North, a post which he was to hold until 1915. During those twenty three years, the Ministry of the North was transformed into the modern Ministry of the Interior, and the foundation for a centralized administration of the provinces was laid. The centralization of the provincial administration was an herculean task, for it entailed not only administrative but also social, fiscal, and judicial, reforms of the traditional Kingdom of Siam.

The Extent of the Kingdom.

When Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Seng Wirayasiri), one of the ablest officials in the history of the modern Ministry of the Interior, joined the Ministry in 1892, he was sure that his superiors knew the frontier towns only by names, that they could not locate them on a map, and that they were scarcely aware of frontier incidents.¹ By modern standards, this is a harsh indictment, but, by the standards of 1892, these faults were understandable. It implied that the officials were not familiar with maps, and this is excusable, for the first reliable map of Siam had only been published in 1887.² It meant that towns on the frontiers were so remote that not only were the officials unfamiliar with them but even news of them hardly reached Bangkok. Difficulties of communication over great distances and the lack of a scientifically demarcated frontier were some of the problems of

1. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Seng Wirayasiri), Ruang Mahatthai in Mahatthai Krasuang, Anuson nuang nai ngan chalong wan thi raluk sathapana Krasuang Mahatthai khrop rop hoksip pi boribun, A Commemorative volume on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the foundation of the Ministry of the Interior (Bangkok, 1952) p.80.

2. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Seng Wirayasiri), Ruang Kamnoet Krom Phaenthi, The Birth of the Survey Department (Bangkok, 1956) p.23. See maps in folder.

provincial administration before 1892.

The lack of a clearly defined frontier was most strongly felt in the north and the east. North of the Principality of Chiangmai, a tributary state of the Kingdom of Siam, the mountains stretched into the Shan State of modern Burma and the north of modern Laos. Although Tongking had become a French Protectorate in 1884, and although Upper Burma had been annexed by Great Britain in 1886, these two great Powers did not carve up this mountainous territory between themselves until 1896.¹

In the east lay Siam's most troublesome neighbour, France. By 1884, Tongking, Annam, and Cochinchina, and more than half of modern Cambodia, had become either Protectorates or integral parts of France.² Not content with these gains, France, on behalf of Annam and Cambodia, also lay claims to all lands east of the Mekong River.³ The absorption of the Sipsong Chu Thai into Tongking in 1888 meant that France had established herself in a position overlooking the Mekong River valley.⁴ Nevertheless, by 1892, in what is today modern

1. P. Duke, Les Relations entre la France et la Thaïlande au XIX Siècle (Bangkok 1962) p.81 and p.218.

2. ibid., p.81.

3. A. Pavie, Mission Pavie, Indochine 1879-1895, Géographie et Voyages, ii, (Paris 1901), p.215.

4. P. Duke, Op.cit., pp.122-127.

Laos, the Annamite Cordillera was still the effective dividing line between the French and the Siamese spheres of influence. In Cambodia, Siamese Battambang faced French Cambodia without a natural frontier.

In the west and the south, the frontier was more clearly defined. The western frontier with British Burma followed the line of mountains, which marked the watershed between the valleys of the Salween and the Chao Phraya (Menam) Rivers. In the south, a jagged line ran between the Siamese tributary states of Kedah, Trengganu, and Kelantan, and the Malay States of Perak and Pahang, both of which had British Residents.¹

Within these ill-defined frontiers lay the Kingdom of Siam. From north to south, she stretched for over a thousand miles; from east to west, at her broadest, she measured well over five hundred miles, but at the narrowest, at the Isthmus of Kra, there was no more than forty miles between the Bay of Bengal and the Gulf of Siam. Her two great rivers are the Mekong River and its tributary streams, which link northern Laos to the plains of Cambodia and Cochinchina, and the Chao Phraya River and its tributaries, which link the north of Siam to Bangkok in the central plains. The Chao Phraya River valley is separated from the Mekong River valley by the Korat

1. J. Kennedy, A History of Malaya, A.D. 1400-1959 (London 1962) pp. 145-162.

Plateau, on the western edge of which lay the malaria-infested Dongrek Range and the Dong Phraya Fai forests.¹

The difficulties of communication were great. Of the three possible modes of transport, by land, by river, or by sea, overland travel was perhaps the most difficult. In 1887, an Englishman, G.J. Younghusband, had this to say on the subject,

'Throughout Siam, as far as we have seen 1000 miles or so, there are no made roads at all. the most important towns are connected only by mere footpaths, worn by pack animals and passengers. The paths are never straight for fifty yards together, and in the forest land wind very much...Beyond felling a tree across it, or pulling a couple of bamboo for foot passengers, no attempt is made at bridging the numerous streams and swamps.'²

Apart from the possibility of contracting malarial fever on the journey, there was also the danger from bandits and wild beasts. Furthermore, the overland routes were passable only during the dry season, which lasted between October and June of each year.³

The rivers and canals, on the other hand, were passable only in the rainy and the cool seasons, which lasted from

1. Mrs. Grindrod, Siam: A Geographical Summary (London 1895) pp. 9-20.

2. G.J. Younghusband, Eighteen Hundred Miles on a Burmese Tat through Burmah, Siam, and the Eastern Shan States (London 1888), pp. 85-86.

3. Mrs. Grindrod, op.cit., pp. 74-79.

June to December. The water was otherwise too low. But the rivers were not without their hazards, for on both the Mekong and the Chao Phraya Rivers, there were shifting sandbanks and dangerous rapids.¹

On the sea, the increasing use of steamships meant that travellers no longer had to depend on the favours of the winds. Before their advent, it was convenient to sail south only between May and September, when there were the south-westerly monsoon winds. The return journey could best be effected between October and April, when the boat could follow the dry north-east winds back to Bangkok.²

One of the results of bad communication was that it took a long time to travel anywhere. It would take thirty days, by river and then by the overland route, to cover the 495 miles from Bangkok, on the Chao Phraya River, to Nongkhai, on the Mekong River.³ Going against the current on the Chao Phraya River it took the American missionary, McGilvary, forty nine days to cover the 545 miles from Bangkok to Chiangmai in 1864.⁴

1 and 2. Mrs. Grindrod, op.cit., pp. 18-20.

3. Mrs. Grindrod, op.cit., pp. 74-79.

4. D. McGilvary, A Half Century among the Siamese and the Lao (New York 1912) p. 70.

The time taken for a particular journey could be cut by half, if provisions had been made for swift boats and horses. In the crisis year of 1893, efforts were made so that swift messengers should take, for the round trip from Bangkok, only twenty nine days to Luang Prabang, twenty eight days to Nongkhai, twenty six to Bassac, twenty four to Ubon, and fourteen days to Battambang.¹

The length of time it took to travel meant that the central government knew little of the provinces let alone of the frontier incidents. Apart from flagrant cases, misgovernment could flourish for a long time undetected. But if bad communication gave relative independence to the provinces, remoteness also meant that there could be no immediate help in time of distress. During the crisis of 1893, when Siam was struggling to maintain her territorial integrity, it took the government a month to transport troops from Bangkok to the Mekong.²

1. National Archives, Bangkok, Fifth Reign, Mahatthai (Ministry of the Interior) Papers, vol. 14, Series 19: Damrong to Sithammasukkarat, 15 April 1893. (Hereafter contract to 'M.14/19' etc.)

2. M.17/19: Phirenthorathep to Damrong, 1/843 20 April 1893.

The Central Government.

The extent of the Kingdom and its bad communications were minor problems compared with the fact that, for most of the nineteenth century, the Kingdom of Siam was not a unitary state with a centralized administration. It is remarkable that, in spite of this handicap, the country did manage to hang together in a reasonably cohesive manner. Reforms were needed, but their necessity cannot be gauged, and the feat of carrying them into effect cannot be appreciated, unless the previous form of central government and provincial administration is known. Since Siamese society, government, and administration, are unfamiliar subjects, it is necessary to introduce their terminology and ideals, before the actual performance of these institutions can be described and assessed.

In theory, the government and administration of Siam were neatly regulated. There was a place for every man and every institution in the Kingdom. At the top of the hierarchy, there was the absolute monarch, who was sanctified as a god and as a Bodhisattva according to the cult of Deva-Raja and the beliefs of Mahayana Buddhism.¹ The relationship between

1. H.G.Q. Wales, Ancient Siamese Government and Administration (1st edn., London 1934) p.16. Hinayana Buddhism in Siam was and is tinged with Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism.

the King and his people was symbolised by the 'palace language' (rachasap) used at court. A subject called himself, 'the servant of the excellent enlightenment', and addressed the King from, 'under the dust of the sole of your August feet'. When the King ascended the throne, he commenced to 'eat the royal treasure'; and when he passed an edict, the people were informed that, 'These are His Majesty's words promulgated as Royal Order like the roaring of the Lion'.¹

In theory, the King's government was functionally differentiated. There were two Prime Ministers, Akkramahasenabodi, one for the civil, Mahatthai, and the other for the military, Kalahom, administration of the country. Below them came the 'Four Supporting Ministers', the Senabodi Chatusadom, the Minister of the Metropolis, Wiang, the Minister of the Palace, Wang, the Minister of Finance, Khlang, and the Minister of Agriculture, Na. The Ministry of the Metropolis collected the rates and taxes, and administered fines for minor offences within the metropolitan area of Bangkok. The Ministry of the Palace had charge of the civil and criminal courts and made judicial appointments throughout the country, because it was nearest to the King who was the fount of all justice. The Ministry of Finance controlled the fiscal administration of

1. O. Frankfurter, Elements of Siamese Grammar (Leipsig 1900) p. 67, p. 72, p. 108, p. 113.

the country, but one of its departments, the Krommatha, dealt with foreign affairs, because the Ministry came into frequent contact with foreigners, since overseas trading was largely a royal monopoly up to the first half of the nineteenth century. The Ministry of Agriculture made sure that ploughing was started at the right time of year, and issued title deeds which gave the peasantry their security of tenure.¹ Below these top six ministers were the six Councillors, Montri, who were in charge of the defence of the palace, the royal scribes, the registration of the people, the expenditure of the revenue, the royal wardrobe, and the religious affairs of the country. Two generals commanded respectively the land and the sea forces.²

The administration of justice was regulated by an elaborate set of checks and balances. A court of twelve brahmins, learned in the laws, decided, first of all, to which court a particular case should go. When the case had been heard, the evidence was returned to the brahmins, who then gave judgement. The sentence came, however, from a punisher, the phu prap. An appeal against the verdict could be made to the King.³

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Laksana kan pokkrong Prathet Sayam tae boran, Ancient Siamese government and administration (Bangkok 1963), pp. 22-27.

2. Rama V, King Chulalongkorn, 'Wa duai thamniam Khunnang Thai', 'On the traditional Thai nobility' in O. Frankfurter, op.cit., pp. 128-130.

3. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., pp. 27-32.

The provincial administration was divided between three ministries. The northern parts were under the Prime Minister for civil administration, the Mahatthai, the south was under the Prime Minister for military administration, the Kalahom, and the seaboard provinces near Bangkok, because they were involved with trade, were under the Department for Foreign Affairs, the Krommatha, in the Ministry of Finance.

The great offices of state and the civil service were filled by members of royal family and the nobility. These two classes, however, were regulated in such a way that, in theory, they could not rival the King in either his splendour or in his power. The royalty, to start with, merged with the commonality after five generations. This meant that there was not a glut of princes, which there otherwise would have been, for the King was allowed to have four Queens and any number of consorts. There were five different ranks of princes. The child of a Queen was a Chao Fa, but one of a consort was a Phra-ong Chao. The grand-child of the King was a Mom Chao. It was accepted that only members of these first two generations of the royal family could be considered properly as Princes. After the Mom Chao came the Mom Ratchawong and then the Mom Luang.¹ The Mom Luang's son was a Nai, or a gentleman-commoner. In this Thesis, the Chao Fa, Phra-ong Chao, and

1. O. Frankfurter, op.cit., pp. 105-106.

Mom Chao, will be referred to as Prince, but the terms, Mom Ratchawong and Mom Luang, will be retained.

The Siamese nobility was not hereditary in the European sense of the word, for its existence, in theory, depended entirely on government service. King Chulalongkorn described the position of the nobility in these terms,

'The custom regarding them is near to that prevailing in China, where rank and office are combined. If a person has rank, he occupies at the same time an office. If he leaves such office he leaves his rank as well, unless the King allows him to keep it on account of services rendered. For that reason most of the nobility remain in office all their life.'¹

The Nai, or gentleman-commoner, the Mom Ratchawong, and the Mom Luang, commenced their climb up the ranks of the nobility as soon as they entered government service. The ranks of the nobility from the bottom upwards were, Khun, Luang, Phra, Phraya, Chao Phraya, and Somdet Chao Phraya. With the rank went a title, which in turn was linked to an office. To give an example, the Prime Minister for the civil administration, and the Minister for the North, had the rank of Chao Phraya, the title of Chakri, which went with the office, Samuha Nayok fai phonlaruan. The rank of the nobility could also be measured by the number of Sakdi na marks attached to his

1. Rama V, King Chulalongkorn, 'op.cit.', in O. Frankfurter, op.cit., p. 120. (author's own translation based on that of Frankfurter.)

position. Sakdi na could be translated as 'power over fields'. These marks probably signified the number of fields (the unit of measurement being the rai, one of which was equal to two-fifths of an acre) which an official was able to hold, but they had for a long time become firstly a prestigious symbol, and secondly a means of calculating judicial fines. An offender, when fined, paid according to his sakdi na scale, which was fair for the culprit and was profitable for the state.¹ The nobility proper was supposed to have at least 400 sakdi na marks, while those below this line were considered petty officials, the kamnan phanthanai.²

Ranks, titles, and sakdi na were also given to the Princes who were in government service. The Prince who was most nearly related to the King and who traditionally commanded the vanguard of the army was given the rank of Second King or Krom Phra Ratchawang Bowon Sathan Mongkhon.³ The first rank given to a Mom Chao was Phra-ong Chao. A Phra-ong Chao by birth could start climbing the ladder of ranks at a step

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., pp. 20-21.

2. O. Frankfurter, op.cit., pp. 130-131.

3. It was understood that the Second King succeeded to the throne if the King died leaving minors or without issue. This in fact happened only once when, in 1605, the Second King Ekatotsarot succeeded King Naresuan to the throne. H.G.Q. Wallis, op.cit., p. 31.

higher, Krommamuen, which led to, Krommakhun, Krommaluang, Krom Phra, Krom Phraya, and finally, Somdet Krom Phraya. The titles given to princes in government service, unlike those of the nobility, were not tied to their offices, but were rather expressions of the King's hopes in and regards for them. When Phra-ong Chao Ditsaworakuman had proved himself worthy of service, he was given the rank of Krommamuen, and the title of Damrong Rachanuphap, which means 'the Upholder of Royal Power'. He kept this title all his life, while his rank rose to that of Somdet Krom Phraya.

As far as some of the tributary states were concerned, the princely ranks, Phra Chao and Chao, and titles of the rulers and great officers of the states of Chiangmai, Lampang, Lamphun, Phrae, Nan, and Bassac, had all been created by the central government in recognition for their services and loyalty to the Crown of Siam. In the first half of the nineteenth century, only those especially favoured rulers of Chiangmai, Lampang, and Lamphun, were made Princes. It was only from 1856 onwards that the princely rank was regularly given to the rulers and great officers of these states.¹ The rank was not hereditary, and the son of a prince was a

1. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Run Siphon), Phongsawadan Muang Nakhorn Chiangmai Muang Nakhon Lampang Muang Lamphun-chai, The Chronicle of Chiangmai, Lampang, and Lamphun (Prachum Phongsawadan, 111, 1962), pp. 7-20.

nai, or a gentleman-commoner. There were no sakdi na marks attached to the rank.¹ The rulers of Nan and Phrae were not made Princes until 1888,² and 1896 respectively.³

Members of the government and administration in Bangkok were not supposed to be great landowners, for their livelihood should have been dependent on their service and on the King's bounty. The Ministers were allowed to keep the fees which arose from their office. The two Prime Ministers, for instance, received fees when they issued writs of appointment in the provinces.⁴ The King also distributed rewards, bia wat, in theory, if and when he thought fit;⁵ but, in practice, the bia wat were distributed annually in November. The Princes were given 1600 baht, the Phraya received from 960 down to 160 baht, the Phra and the Luang from 120 to 60 baht, and the minor officials got from 40 to 12 baht.⁶ The noble-

1. M.204/51: Chulalongkorn to Cabinet, Praphat R.181/110 24 June 1891.

2. Phra Chao Suriyaphong Pharitdet, Phongsawadan Muang Nan, The Chronicle of Nan (Prachum Phonsawadan, x, 1918), p. 169.

3. M.54/39: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, 76/725, 7 October 1896.

4 and 5. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Tamnan Phasi Akon bang yang, The History of Some Taxes (Latthi Thamiam tang tang, xvi, 1923) pp. 8-9.

6. J.-B. Pallegoix, Description du Royaume Thai ou Siam (Paris, 1854) i, 295.

men who had more than 400 sakdi na marks were also given the privilege of not having to appear at court when summoned and were allowed to send representatives.¹ All Nai, or gentlemen-commoners, had another privilege, whereby, unlike the common people, they were not tattooed and registered for government service.

The government's source of strength and income, apart from the revenue from taxation, lay in the labour of the common people or the phrai. It is hard to estimate the population of Siam in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1910, when the first nation-wide census survey took place, it was found that the Kingdom had a population of just over eight million. Taking into account the facts that, by that time, Siam had been shorn of most of her tributary states and some of her provinces the combined population of which was then just over a million, and that the annual over-all population growth rate was then just over 3%, her population in 1892 was probably just over four million.² At the beginning of every reign, all able-bodied men, between the ages of eighteen and sixty, were tattooed on their wrists and registered under various departments of the administration. All

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Laksana Kan Pokkrong Prathet Sayam tae boran, Ancient Siamese government and administration (Bangkok 1963), p. 21.

2. See Appendix I, p.406 The Population of Siam in 1892.

boys on reaching the age of eighteen had to register themselves in any case. Those between eighteen and twenty had to work for the government for one month of the year, or else to commute their service by paying a tax of six baht. From the age of twenty to sixty, they had to work for the government for three months of the year or else to pay the Commutation tax, or kha ratchakan, of eighteen baht. Service and commutation tax could also be reckoned in kind.¹ The government benefitted from this system in four ways. Firstly, the common people provided an abundant supply of free labour, secondly, they could all be called to arms rapidly in case of war, thirdly, those who paid their commutation tax in kind provided valuable goods, and finally, those who paid it in cash provided the government with money.

The common people also provided the nobility with a source of livelihood. A position in the government service entitled a nobleman to have a certain number of men attached to him from whom he could command either service or commutation tax.² He could also use the other men in his charge to do things which had nothing to do with government service. Prince Damrong said that the men also voluntarily gave presents to the

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., pp. 15-21.

2. Luang Siworawat (Phin Chantharotchawong), 'Phongsawadan Muang Phatthalung', 'The Chronicle of Phatthalung', in Phongsawadan Muang Songkhla lae Phatthalung, (The Chronicles of Songkhla and Phatthalung (Bangkok 1962), p. 121.

officials.¹ They probably did this, however, in order to please the officials, who were in a position to make their lives happy or miserable according to the kind of work they set them and whether or not they accepted their commutation tax.

Slavery provided another means of livelihood for the nobility. There were two kinds of slaves, the slaves-of-war, and the debt-slaves; the former could not, but the latter, who had sold themselves into slavery, could redeem their freedom. Both kinds could be sold on the market.² Apart from working for their masters, the slaves were also expected to work for the government for eight days of the year. The master could, however, pay a commutation tax of one baht fifty stangs on a slave's behalf.³ It is hard to estimate the number of slaves in Siam in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Pallegoix, the French Catholic priest, who lived in Siam from 1830 to 1854, reckoned that, in his time, one-third of the country's population consisted of slaves. This figure is probably too high and so far remains unvalidated. Pallegoix,

1. Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., p. 21.

2. Phraya Anuman Ratchathon, Ruang Loek That nai Ratchakan thi Ha, The Abolition of Slavery in the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Bangkok 1956), pp. 27-30.

3. Kachon Sukkaphanit, Thanadon Phrai, The Condition of the Common People (Bangkok 1962), pp. 35-36.

in any case, excused the Siamese for possessing slaves by saying that, 'They only work them very lightly and often treat them much better than servants are treated in France'.¹

The orderly regulation of Siamese government and society in theory belied the fact that they both worked quite differently in practice. During the course of the nineteenth century, the King did not have the resources which would have enabled him to be an absolute monarch. The bulk of the revenue remained in the hands of the ministers and there were few ways of extracting it from them. This situation had arisen because many of the most important ministries and departments had been taken over by one family, the Bunnag family. This family, related to the ruling Chakri dynasty by marriage, began to dominate politics from the 1820s onwards when King Nang Klao, Rama III, depended on their support against his princely cousins.² For the next half century, during a period which spanned three reigns, those of King Nang Klao (1824-1851), King Mongkut (1851-1868), and part of the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), members of this family held, without a break, the Prime Ministership for the military

1. J.-B. Pallegoix, op.cit., p. 229.

2. Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong (Kham Bunnag), Phraratchaphong-sawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi Sam, The Chronicle of the reign of King Nang Klao (Bangkok 1961), i, 1-9.

administration (the Kalahom) and the Ministry of Finance (the Khlang). The Ministry of the Metropolis (the Wiang) was also in their hands for long periods of time.¹ By the presentation of consorts to the King and the Princes, by judicious marriages to other families, and by intermarriage among themselves, they were able to increase their control over the government from year to year. When King Chulalongkorn came to the throne in 1868, the Bunnag family, under its head, Chao Phraya Sisuriyawong (Chuang Bunnag), was at the height of power.²

The result of the monarchy's loss of control over some of the most important offices of state meant that it became relatively poor. There was no-one to demand that all the revenue should be presented to the King. King Chulalongkorn wrote that, '...the government's revenue fell from year to year, until there was barely enough to use from month to month...'³ He estimated that between 1868 and 1873, the

1. ibid., i, 112 and 123; and, ii, 36. For further instances of that monopoly of offices by this family, see also, Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong (Kham Bunnag), Phraratchaphonsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi Si, The Chronicle of the reign of King Mongkut (Bangkok 1961) i, 66-68.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi Ha, The Chronicle of the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Bangkok 1961), p. 19.

3. Rama V, King Chulalongkorn, Phraratchadamrat song thalaeng Phraborommarachathibai kae khai kan pokkhong Phaendin, Announcement and Explanation of the reform of the Government and the administration (1st edn., Bangkok 1927), p. 43.

revenue declined from the region of 4,800,000 baht per annum to about 1,600,000.¹ Under such circumstances, it was hardly surprising that the King's revenue was sufficient only for the construction of palaces and temples, royal and religious ceremonies, and the annual bia wat rewards.²

Another consequence of the monarchy's loss of control over important offices was that it became relatively weak. First of all, it lost the power of patronage, for the ministers held the administrative apparatus in their hands and made appointments and promotions within their own network of connections. Secondly, it lost direct control over the common people, the phrai. There was no-one to demand the latest lists of able-bodied men from the various departments, as a result of which it was the ministers, who were in control of the people's annual three months' service and commutation tax.³ Since it did not have effective control over the common people, it probably had little knowledge of the number of slaves and

1. Rama V, King Chulalongkorn, Phraratchahatthalekha Phrabat Somdet Phra Chulachomklao Chao Yu Hua song mi pai ma kap Somdet Phra mahasommanachao Krom Phraya Wachirayan Warorot, Correspondence with the Prince Patriarch Wachirayan Warorot (Bangkok 1929), pp. 224-228.

2. H.G.Q. Wales, op.cit., pp. 225-230.

3. Rama V, King Chulalongkorn, Phraratchadamrat song tha-laeng Phraborommarachathibai kae khai kan pokkhong Phaendin, Announcement and explanation of the reform of the government and the administration (1st edn., Bangkok 1927), p. 15.

consequently collected almost nothing from the slaves' commutation tax.

It was, however, not just the Crown which was relatively poor and weak, for the central government, as a whole, suffered the same fate. The control of the ministries and the administration by a certain faction of the nobility had little to do with this, for it was just that the yield of the revenue bore no relation to the actual wealth of the country. There was little direct collection of taxes, and when there was, it did not spread far into the provinces. The Ministry of Agriculture, the Na, only collected the Rice Tax directly from four provinces within easy reach of Bangkok.¹ Most of the taxes were farmed out to the highest bidder, which meant that the government received a fixed sum of money over a number of years, while the tax-farmers collected as much as they could and pocketed the profit. The tax-farms were rarely nation-wide, and most of them covered only a small area of the country. In 1856, for instance, there was a tobacco tax-farm for the provinces of Sawankhalok and Sukhothai.² The fact that there were so many tax-farms, all

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Tamnan Phasi Akon Bang Yang, The History of Some Taxes (Latthi Thamnam Tang Tang, xvi, 1923) p. 4.

2. ibid., pp. 51-56.

of which made their payments in instalments, meant that book-keeping became extremely difficult. There could be many muddles and delays, and the opportunities for corruption were numerous.

The Crown's and the central government's lack of money was the reason why there was not a professional civil service. Since there was not enough money to enable the government to give regular salaries, the officials, apart from the King's annual bia wat rewards, had to look for their own livelihood. They were allowed, first of all, to keep judicial fees; a privilege which led to much abuse of the administration of justice. Court proceedings were supposed to last only three days, but the officials dragged them on for two or three years, so that either the plaintiff or the defendant would offer bribes in order to influence the decision. According to Pallegoix, the practice was that, 'The best way to win a case is to promise a big sum to an influential public figure, who will then concern himself with your affairs'.¹ Another source of income for the officials was the administration of the people. In theory, each official was allowed the service and commutation tax of a certain number of common people, but, in practice, since the exact number of able-bodied

1. J.-B. Pallegoix, op.cit., i, 357-361.

men could be easily concealed, an official could obtain much more service and money than he was allowed.¹

The poverty and weakness of both the Crown and the government must not, however, be construed out of their historical context. It was precisely during the reign of King Nang Klao, Rama III (1824-1851), that Siam was aggressively expanding in all directions. In the north, the Shan state of Chiangtung (Kengtung) was under Siamese pressure from 1849 to 1853;² in the east, Siamese armies campaigned in Cochinchina in 1833 and 1841;³ and in the south, the Siamese interfered directly in the internal affairs of one of the Malay tributary states, Kedah, from 1821 to 1842.⁴ In the west, Mergui was captured in 1825, but, as a sign that the days when Siam could more than hold her own in south-east Asia were numbered, it was immediately handed over to the new master of Burma, Great Britain.⁵ In the first half of the nineteenth century,

1. ibid., i, 296.

2. Chotmaihet ruang Thap Chiangtung, Documents concerning military campaigns against Kengtung, ed. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap (Bangkok 1916), introduction, pp. (1)-(4).

3. Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong (Kham Bunnag), Phraratchaphong-sawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi Sam, The Chronicle of the reign of King Nang Klao (Bangkok 1961), i, 131-147, and ii, 63-74.

4 and 5. ibid., 79-89; and 36-39.

the government did not need much money in order to go to war, for it could call up the common people, who then had to serve in the army without pay and to provide their own arms, food, and beddings.¹ The navy was provided for in the same way. When fleets were needed for the defence of the Gulf of Siam against possible Annamite attacks in 1828 and 1834, the Chinese tax-farmers, who had capital and controlled skilled labour, built warships for the government instead of sending in their tax-farms payment instalments.²

As the government did not need much money in order to go to war, so its poverty did not prevent it from undertaking public-works. The digging of canals and the construction of walls, forts, palaces, and temples, could largely be done by the common people during their three months of government service.³ If a job needed to be done quickly and professionally, the the government could use the revenue to employ skilled wage labourers.⁴ Under the old system of government,

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Laksana Kan Pokkhrong Prathet Sayam tae boran, Ancient Siamese government and administration (Bangkok 1963), pp. 15-16.

2. Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong (Kham Bunnag), op.cit., i, 93-96, and 156.

3. Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong (Kham Bunnag), Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi Nung, The Chronicle of the reign of King Phra Phutthayotfa (Bangkok 1960), i, 78.

4. Skilled wage labourers were used for the first time in the building of the ports at Paknam and Phrapradang between 1822 and 1824. See Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong (Kham Bunnag) Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi Song, The Chronicle of the reign of King Loetla (Bangkok 1961), pp. 153-154.

the use of wage labour did not, however, entirely supercede that of the common people's service.¹

It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century, when Siamese territorial integrity and independence were threatened by France and Great Britain, that the evils of the prevailing system of government were felt. Up till then, the Siamese had had to deal with enemies whose power was comparable to their own, but now they had to deal with advanced European Powers, and they found that their government was quite unequal to the task.

King Chulalongkorn diagnosed the ills of the government, and realized that it suffered from insufficient functional differentiation. He was perfectly correct, for the lack of functional differentiation was far greater in practice than in theory. There was no adherence to the major division of the administration between civilian and military affairs. The Prime Minister for the civil administration, the Mahatthai, apart from having the responsibility for supervising the northern parts of the country, was also the Minister in charge of some of the most important military departments in the Kingdom, the Elephants, the Cavalry, and the Artillery Departments. The Department of the Palace Guards, though not directly under the Mahatthai, was, nevertheless, counted

1. Siam Repository, ed. S.J. Smith (Bangkok, 1, 1869), III.

as being on the civilian side of the administration.¹ The Prime Minister for military administration, the Kalahom, instead of being concerned with military affairs, also supervised the civil administration of the southern provinces. The Krommatha, instead of being concerned solely with foreign affairs, also supervised the sea-board provinces.

It seemed that, including its own job, each ministry had to perform all the other ministries' functions as well. The fiscal administration was not only the concern of the Ministry of Finance, the Khlang, for it was not just the Ministry of Metropolis, the Wiang, which had its own revenue office to collect the rates and taxes in the capital, but all the other ministries also collected taxes. The Mahatthai, apart from its territorial and military responsibility, administered the tax-farms on floating-market boats, ordinary boats, theatres, bamboo canes, and teak logs. The Kalahom, with the same basic work-load, administered the tax-farms on liquor, flour, sugar-cane juice, frying pans, pig iron, and charcoal.² The Ministry of Finance was finally left with only the collection of the Chinese poll tax, the gardens and fruit-trees taxes, and the tax-farm for firewood.³

1. Rama V, King Chulalongkorn, op.cit., pp. 44-46.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Tamnan Phasi Akon Bang Yang, The History of Some Taxes (Latthi Thamnam Tang Tang, xvi, 1923), pp. 26-29.

3. Rama V, King Chulalongkorn, op.cit., pp. 38-41.

The administration of justice suffered from the same lack of functional differentiation. It was again not only the Ministry of the Metropolis which had its own court to administer fines for minor offences within the capital, but every ministry also had its own court to deal with cases arising from its particular sphere of administration. This happened presumably because legal fees and opportunities for corruption were important sources of livelihood for the officials. Before the reforms of the judicial administration, there were eighteen ministerial courts in Bangkok. The Court of Probates and Wills, for instance, being potentially very lucrative, was reserved for the Department of the Palace Guards. The delays in the courts were interminable, because, not only did pecuniary interests make the judges prolong cases, but also because they were not trained lawyers and because the court of brahmins, which decided to which courts cases should go and gave judgements, could not keep up with all the work expected of it.¹

The old system of government and administration hampered Siam from effectively defending herself against France and Great Britain in many ways. The major consequence of the lack of functional differentiation was the inefficiency of

1. Rama V, King Chulalongkorn, op.cit., pp. 16-33.

the central organs of the government, as a result of which it took a great deal of time to get anything done. King Chulalongkorn described the situation in these terms,

'Since the work is divided between many departments, there is no one to give orders, and there is no co-operation. When a matter is in need of attention, it is passed from one ministry to another, and by the time it completes the rounds of the ministries concerned, there is a wasteful delay.'¹

The delays and the corruption in the judicial administration meant that the Siamese had neither the moral right to condemn the Europeans' privilege of extraterritoriality nor the ability to stop the people from applying for foreign citizenship. The control of the ministries by a faction of the nobility, and the inefficient method of tax collection meant that Siam did not have the money to raise a professional army, to arm it with modern weapons, and to improve the means of communication, so that it could be moved immediately to the frontier when an emergency arose. Under the old system, the centralization of the provincial administration, which would have given the provinces better protection against encroachment and at the same time increased the central government's revenue, was unthinkable.

King Chulalongkorn, having diagnosed the ills of the government, also prescribed their cures, which were, firstly

1. ibid., p. 57.

'to divide the work so that each ministry is responsible for that which it is capable of doing', and, secondly, 'to end the system whereby all the ministries collect taxes on their own without keeping any accounts of either income or expenditure.'¹ The King was the herald of reform, not only because it was his duty to look after the national interests, but also because it was the way to restore power to the monarchy. The modernization of the central government implied great political changes. It was the success in overcoming the opposition with its vested interests in the old system which enabled King Chulalongkorn to launch his major reforms in 1892. But it was to take the King more than twenty years to overcome the opposition to the reforms of the central government, it was to take him and his successors that same amount of time and more to uproot the vested interests in the old system of provincial administration.

iii

The Provincial Administration

The provincial administration of Siam before 1892 can be approached in the same manner as the central government. There were the same patterns of the disparity between theory

1. Rama V, King Chulalongkorn, op.cit., p. 57.

and practice and of inherent weakness and strength. There was the need for reforms, which was the result of both external pressure and internal frustration with the forces which came between the government and resources, in man-power and in revenue, of the country.

The central government divided the territory of the Kingdom into three administrative categories, the inner and the outer provinces,¹ and the tributary states. The inner provinces were those which had formed the core of the Kingdom from the fifteenth century onwards. They were sub-divided into four classes. Originally, the fourth class provinces were the ones in the near vicinity of the capital. The first and second class provinces were either those on the frontiers, or those which, once upon a time, had had their own princely ruling houses. The third class provinces were new units of administration, formed when certain parts of the country, as a result of their development, had outgrown the administrative capacity of their former supervisors, which could have been either first or second class provinces.² The outer provinces

1. The literal translation of the word, 'Muang' is 'town', but, since a Muang's jurisdiction spread into the surrounding country-side I have translated it as 'province'.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Laksana kan pokkhrong Prathet Sayam tae boran, Ancient Siamese government and administration (Bangkok 1963), pp. 27-32.

lay between the inner provinces and the Laotian tributary states. Their associations with the Kingdom was of a comparatively recent date, for they could be traced back only to the second half of the eighteenth century at the earliest.¹ In 1892, the tributary states in the north and north-east were the Kingdom of Luang Prabang and the Principalities of Chiangmai, Lampang, Lamphun, Phrae, Nan, and Bassac. The Kingdom of Cambodia was intermittently a tributary state from the end of the eighteenth century until 1867. In the south, the tributary states were the Sultanates of Trengganu, Kelantan, and Kedah.²

In theory, the ministries with territorial responsibility, the Mahatthai, the Kalahom, and the Krommatha, were supposed to directly administer their provinces. There was a Law of 1802, directed at all classes of provinces, which centralized all departments of provincial administration. The three ministries were supposed to appoint governors, phu raksa muang, acting-governors, phu rang muang, deputy governors, palat, and assistant deputy governors, rong palat. The registrars, the secretaries, the revenue and the agricultural officers, were

1. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, Phongsawadan Huamuang Monthon Isan, The Chronicle of the provinces in Monthon Isan (Prachum Phongsawadan, iv, 1963), 30.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattakosin Ratchakan thi Song, The Chronicle of the reign of King Loetla (Bangkok 1962), p. 233.

supposed to be appointed respectively by the Department of the Registration of the People, the Department of the Royal Scribes, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Agriculture.¹

The governors of first, second, and third class provinces were also made phu samret ratchakan, which title enabled the holder to have powers of life and death. This absolute power, which belonged solely to the King, was given so that the people would know that the governors were truly the King's representatives.²

The central government did not, however, aim to centralize the administration of the outer provinces and the tributary states. It did not try to appoint their rulers directly, but it did insist on sending them insignia of office as marks of official recognition. It gave them independence in their internal affairs, but, in return, it expected the outer provinces to send annually tribute-money (ngoen suai) and the tributary states to send triennially Gold and Silver Trees and other rich gifts. Military assistance was also expected in time of war.³

1. Ruang Kotmai Muang Thai, Thai Laws (4th edn., Bangkok, ii, 1881), 498-501.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Laksana kan pokkhrong Prathet Sayam tae boran, Ancient Siamese government and administration (Bangkok 1963), p.14.

3. ibid., p. 14.

As when the central government itself was considered, the neat regulation of the provincial administration in theory belies the fact that it did not work in quite the same way in practice. In reality, the central government directly administered only a small area of the country called the Wang Ratchathani.¹ It was thought that the Wang Ratchathani stretched to Lopburi in the north, Nakhon Nayok in the east, Suphanburi in the west, and Phrapradaeng in the south,² but, in 1891, the government directly administered only Prathumthani and Nonthaburi in the north and Phrapradaeng and Samutprakan in the south.³ Since, for lack of money and sic salaried civil servants, the Law of 1802 concerning the centralization of the provincial administration was not implemented, the government, by not being able to directly appoint provincial officials, lost control of the labour and revenue in the provinces. Since the lack of centralization did not lead to the country's disintegration, the old system of provincial administration, which was viable for most of the nineteenth

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Ruang Tamnan Muang Ranong, The History of Ranong (2nd edn., Bangkok, 1931), p.1.

2. D. Vongkomolshet, 'The Administrative, Judicial and Financial Reforms of King Chulalongkorn, 1868-1910' (Cornell University M.A. thesis, 1958), p.43.

3. M.204/51: Minutes of a Cabinet Meeting, II June 1891.

century, has to be examined before the necessity for reforms can be appreciated, and the difficulty of implementing them can be felt.

The central government had to recognize the fact that it had originally little choice in the appointment of governors. It gave the title of governor to the obvious leader of a particular group of people. For an example, in 1793, when 4000 people, who had marched from the Principality of Viantiane, decided to settle in a small village in the north-east called Ban Kaeng Samrong, their leader was made the governor of that settlement, the status of which was changed to that of a town, and the name of which was changed to Kalasin.¹

In time of war, the natural leader, whom the government had to recognize as a governor, was usually a military leader. In 1772, when the country was in a state of anarchy after the sack of the old capital, Ayutthya, by the Burmese in 1767, King Taksin made the local warrior, Khun, nick-named 'Iron Jaws', the new governor of the southern town of Phatthalung.²

1. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., pp. 41-42.

2. Luang Siworawat (Phin Chantharotchawong), 'Phongsawadan Muang Phatthalung', in Phongsawadan Muang Songkhla lae Phatthalung, op.cit., p. 83.

At that time the government was so weak that it had to accept even its enemies as governors. In 1776, having driven the ruling family out of Nakhon Sithammarat for having declared the city independent of the Kingdom, King Taksin immediately had to reinstate it in its position. Furthermore, he had to elevate the head of the family to the rank of Prince and to concede that the city was a tributary state of and not a province under the government. These concessions had to be made because the family was powerful and the city was strategically situated between the inner provinces and the Malay tributary states.¹

Military leadership was not, however, the only way of becoming an obvious provincial leader, for the government also took financial status into consideration. The rise of the Chinese families of Songkhla and Ranong to governorships and the take-over of the governorship of Phetburi by the Bunnag family demonstrated how economic strength led to the attainment of political power. In 1769 and 1844, when the major tax-farms of Songkhla and Ranong, the birds' nests and gum-trees farms, were auctioned, they were both won by the Chinese.² In 1859, the Bunnag family took over the sugar tax-

1. Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong (Kham Bunnag), Phraratchaphong-sawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi Nung, The Chronicle of the reign of King Phra Phutthayotfa (Bangkok 1960), i, 90-92.

2. Phraya Wichiankhiri (Chom na Songkhla), 'Phongsawadan Muang Songkhla', 'The Chronicle of Songkhla', in Phongsawadan Muang Songkhla lae Phatthalung, op.cit., pp.1-3; and Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., pp. 7-8.

farm which was the major tax-farm of Phetburi.¹ In the first two cases, the new tax-farmers became governors of their provinces within ten years of winning their contracts. In the third case, a member of the Bunnag family became the governor of Phetburi within approximately the same period of time.

The government recognized financial strength as synonymous with political power because, when none of the officials were paid salaries, it was absolutely vital for the governor to have the most lucrative tax-farm so that he would be able to use the profit from it to pay his followers. The lack of money automatically reduced the governor's influence and power and the government then transferred its recognition to someone else.² In Songkhla, the old governor was dismissed. In Ranong, the government waited until he died before the new natural leader was given the post. In Phetburi, the Bunnag family first appointed one of its members as the deputy governor and another member as governor at the beginning of

1. Rama V, King Chulalongkorn, Phraratchahatthalekha...mua sadet praphat monthon Ratburi r.s.128, Letters written from monthon Ratburi to the cabinet in 1909 (Bangkok 1927), p.3.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., p. 10.

the reign of King Chulalongkorn.¹

The government formalized its relationship with the recognized provincial leader by giving him a writ of appointment, or sanyabat. On obtaining this piece of paper, which was signed by the King himself, the local leader became the legitimate representative of the government. Since a governorship was lucrative, and gave its holder much power and influence, the government charged a fixed rate of fees for issuing the writ of appointment. The sanyabat of a governor of a first class province cost 560 baht in 1892.²

The governors, like the nobility in Bangkok, were given ranks, titles, and sakdi na. It was thought that the ranks of the governors of second, third, and fourth class provinces were respectively Phraya, Phra, and Luang.³ There was not, however, a strict adherence to this rule, for the rank was dependent on the length and quality of service rather than on the office itself. The governor of the second class

1. Natthawut Sutthisongkram, Somdet Chao Phraya Borommaha Sisuriyawong Mahaburut, A Biography of Somdet Chao Phraya Borommaha Sisuriyawong, i, (Bangkok 1961), p.156, and p.160. Phra Phetphisai Sisawat (Thuam Bunnag) was deputy governor of Phetburi from c. 1857 to c. 1867. He was succeeded in his rank, title, and office by Thet Bunnag, who became Phraya Surintha-raruchai, the governor of Phetburi in c. 1869.

2. M.10/19: Damrong to Chalalongkorn, 33/1926, 4 July, 1892. I have so far been unable to find the full tariff for the fees of all the sanyabats.

3. J.-B. Pallegoix, op.cit., i, 293.

province of Songkhla, for instance, should have been a Phraya, but, between 1777 and 1901, out of eight governors, three were promoted to the rank of Chao Phraya.¹ The governors of the three first class provinces, Nakhon Sithammarat, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Phitsanulok, were either Phrayas or Chao Phrayas.²

It was not just in the appointment of governors that the government originally lacked choice, for, once it accepted the fact that it was unable to centralize the provincial administration, it also had to allow the governor to select his own officials. Prince Thewawong, the Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1885 to 1923, described the situation when the sea-board provinces were under his ministry's supervision in these terms,

'As far as my opinion and the practice of the past are concerned,...I have always appointed officials who had been recommended to me by the governors. The governors are totally responsible for their provinces, and the appointment of people who are disagreeable to them has not led to good result.'³

1. See infra, Table I, p. 35.

2. Thamniap Huamuang, List of Towns and Titles of Governors (Bangkok, c. 1899), pp. 20-93.

3. National Archives, Bangkok, Fifth Reign, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Papers, vol. 7, Series B: Thewawong to Sonabandit, 9/7335 14 August, 1891. Prince Thewawong's name is also transliterated as Prince Devawongse.

A governor usually recommended his relations for posts in the local administration, the most important of which were those of the deputy-governor, palat, the judge, yokkrabat, and the assistant, phu chuai. Since these posts, like the governorship itself, were lucrative and influential, their prospective holders had to pay fees before they were issued with writs of appointments, sanyabats, which legitimized their positions. The deputy governor of Yiring in the south had to pay 3200 Mexican dollars, or about 300 baht, for his sanyabat in 1889.¹ The sanyabats of senior officials were signed by the King, but those of the more junior ones, such as that of the official in charge of the district administration, the mahatthai, were signed by the Minister in charge of that particular part of the country.²

A governor appointed a host of officials, who did not have to obtain writs of appointment from the government. The local administration was a copy of the central government in Bangkok. In the small third class province of Phatthalung, for instance, there were officials in charge of the judicial administration, the wiang, the governor's household, the wang,

1. Prince Sommot Ammoraphan, Chotmai het Phrabat Somdet Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua sadet praphat Laem Malayu khrao r.s. 107 lae 108, Documents concerning King Chulalongkorn's tour of the Malay Peninsula in 1888 and 1889 (Bangkok 1924), p.52.

2. Luang Siworawat, op.cit., p.121. It was a coincidence that the office of the official in charge of the district administration in Phatthalung was called the Mahatthai, which was the same as that of the Prime Minister for the civil administration and the Minister of the North.

the province's finance, the khlang, and agriculture, the na. Other officials were in charge of the registration of able-bodied men, the organisation of their three months' government service, and the collection of their commutation tax either in cash or in kind. There was also a military commander.¹

As the government did not have its own officials in the countryside, it had to allow the provinces to have their own independent financial administration. As the King, when he ascended the throne, was said to begin 'to eat the Royal Treasure', so the governor, on receiving his writ of appointment, was said to begin 'to eat the town', or kin muang. In 1884, the administration of the first class province of Nakhon Sithammarat levied taxes on gold, silver, wooden planks, and unworked wicker. They also collected a Chinese poll tax triennially.² Furthermore, like the officials of the central government, they had the right to demand service from the common people, the phrai, which could be commuted by payment of a tax, the kha ratchakan.

The government did not interfere in the provinces' financial administration, and the local authorities themselves decided on the expenditure of their revenue. Since the

1. ibid., pp. 121-124.

2. Prince Phanwangsri, Chiwiwat, Travels (Ruang Thieo Thi Tang Tang, vii, 1928), 101.

government did not pay salaries, revenue from all sources was divided between the officials in order to provide them with a livelihood. Apart from being allowed to keep judicial fees, an official in the provinces, like his counterpart in Bangkok, was allotted a number of men, from whom he could demand either service or commutation tax. In 1828, the body of officials of the north-eastern outer province of Ubon was allotted 1500 men for personal service out of a total of 5500 able-bodied men.¹ In Nakhon Sithammarat, during the same period, the deputy governor collected commutation in kind, in the form of betel-nuts, from three villages in the city's vicinity.² A governor's power depended on his share of the revenue, which he spent on rewarding and arming his followers. If, as in the cases of Songkhla and Ranong mentioned earlier, he lost control over his own fiscal administration, his influence declined automatically; and the central government, anxious to have stability in the provinces, had then to transfer its recognition to the new local leader.

The government allowed a governor to control not only the financial but also the judicial administration of a province.

1. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 53.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi Song, The Chronicle of the reign of King Loetla (Bangkok 1962), p. 237.

It was not for nothing that the governor was commonly known as the Chao Muang, or the Lord of the Province, for, possessing great power, he was able to interpret the law as arbitrarily as he liked. Henri Mouhot, the French explorer, who travelled in the north-east of Siam in 1859 and 1860, remarked that the governor of the first class town of Nakhon Ratchasima was, 'very severe, cutting off an head or an hand without much compunction.'¹ Phraya Wichiankhiri (Thianseng na Songkhla), used to sentence those who disobeyed him to thirty strokes of the cane and a spell in prison.²

The independence in the internal affairs of the province, which the government left to the governor, included the administration of the area around the provincial town. In theory, the local government was supposed to administer directly the area around the town, so that it could use to the full the resources of the province in both man-power and revenue. In the classic model, the area around the town was divided into three units of administration, the largest of which was the district (khwaeng), which was divided into the sub-district (tambon), and the village (ban). The governor

1. Henri Mouhot, Travels in the Central Parts of Indochina (Siam), Cambodia, and Laos (London 1864), ii, 113.

2. Phraya Wichiankhiri (Chom na Songkhla), 'Phongsawadan Muang Songkhla', in Phongsawadan Muang Songkhla lae Phatthalung, op.cit., pp. 38-39.

was supposed to appoint the officials in charge of these units of administration, namely, the district officer (muen khwaeng), the commune elder, (kamnan, also known as phan), and the village elder (kae ban).¹ These administrative divisions seem to have corresponded to the number of able-bodied men under each of the officers in the district. The sub-district officer was probably in charge of approximately a thousand men, because one of the names of his office, phan, means 'a thousand'. The district officer was probably in charge of ten thousand men, because muen meant 'ten thousand'. The names of these units of administration varied from one part of the country to another; in the north-east, for instance, they were known as, from top to bottom, amphoe, khwaeng, and ban.² Furthermore, it was not necessary for a town to divide its surrounding area into three units of administration; in Phatthalung, the province was divided only into districts, amphoe.³

However, just as the government originally had little choice in the appointment of governors, so a governor's choice

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Laksana kan pokkhong Prathet Sayam tae boran, Ancient Siamese government and administration (Bangkok 1963), p. 14.

2. Toem Singhatsathit, Fang Khwa Maenam Khong, On the Right Bank of the Mekong River (Bangkok 1956), i, 496-507.

3. Luang Siworawat (Phin Chantharotchawong), op.cit., p.125.

of district officials was confined to local strong men, whose power had to be recognized and legitimized. It even turned out that some district officials were in fact nothing more or less than local bandit leaders. A famous case of this was the district officer of a district near Ayutthaya, who had the rank of Luang, the title of 'The Lightener of Misery' (Banthao-thuk), and turned out to be a master criminal and a receiver of stolen goods.¹ The provincial government did not try to interfere directly in the districts. Its fiscal administration did not spread to the remote districts, because the tax-collectors did not dare to go too far from the provincial town.² This meant that the district officials could send in the minimal amount of commutation tax in cash or in kind, for there was no one to check whether or not it was the correct amount. The provincial government's judicial administration did not spread into the districts either, for the district officers were allowed to settle minor disputes and judged minor cases.³ In theory, serious cases had to be referred to

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena (Siri Thephatsadin na Ayutthaya), Thesaphitan, The Thesaphitan system of provincial administration (2nd edn., Bangkok 1960), pp. 28-29.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Ruang Prawat Chao Phraya Yommarat, The Biography of Chao Phraya Yommarat (Bangkok 1939), pp. 80-81.

3. Luang Siworawat (Phin Chantharotchawong), 'Phongsawadan Muang Phatthalung', in Phongsawadan Muang Songkhla lae Phatthalung, op.cit., p. 125.

the governor's court, but it was much more likely that they too were settled on the spot.

In spite of the governor's failure to control the whole of the province directly, the government had left enough power for him to further his own ends. If he and his family were engaged in trade and industry, they were able to make it difficult for outsiders to come to set up shops and factories in their province. The advantage lay in their control of the financial administration, which meant that they could tax their rivals to the full, while either not taxing themselves or allowing themselves to be very lightly taxed. If a tax-farmer came from Bangkok to levy tax on a commodity, which they themselves did not tax, they could make it so difficult for him to accomplish his task, that he would have to give them a share in the profit and to take them into partnership.¹

Having left the governors with control over the vital resources of the provinces, the government had to tolerate the fact that they embarked on their own policies of political aggrandizement and territorial expansion. The first class province of Nakhon Sithammarat, for instance, with a population of well over 100,000, was well equipped to conduct provincial power-politics.² It used its strength to spread

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., p. 25.

2. Prince Phanurangsi, op.cit., p. 101.

its influence over twenty provinces, whose governors were either its nominees or were members of cadet branches of the Na Nakhon family, the ruling family of Nakhon Sithammarat.¹

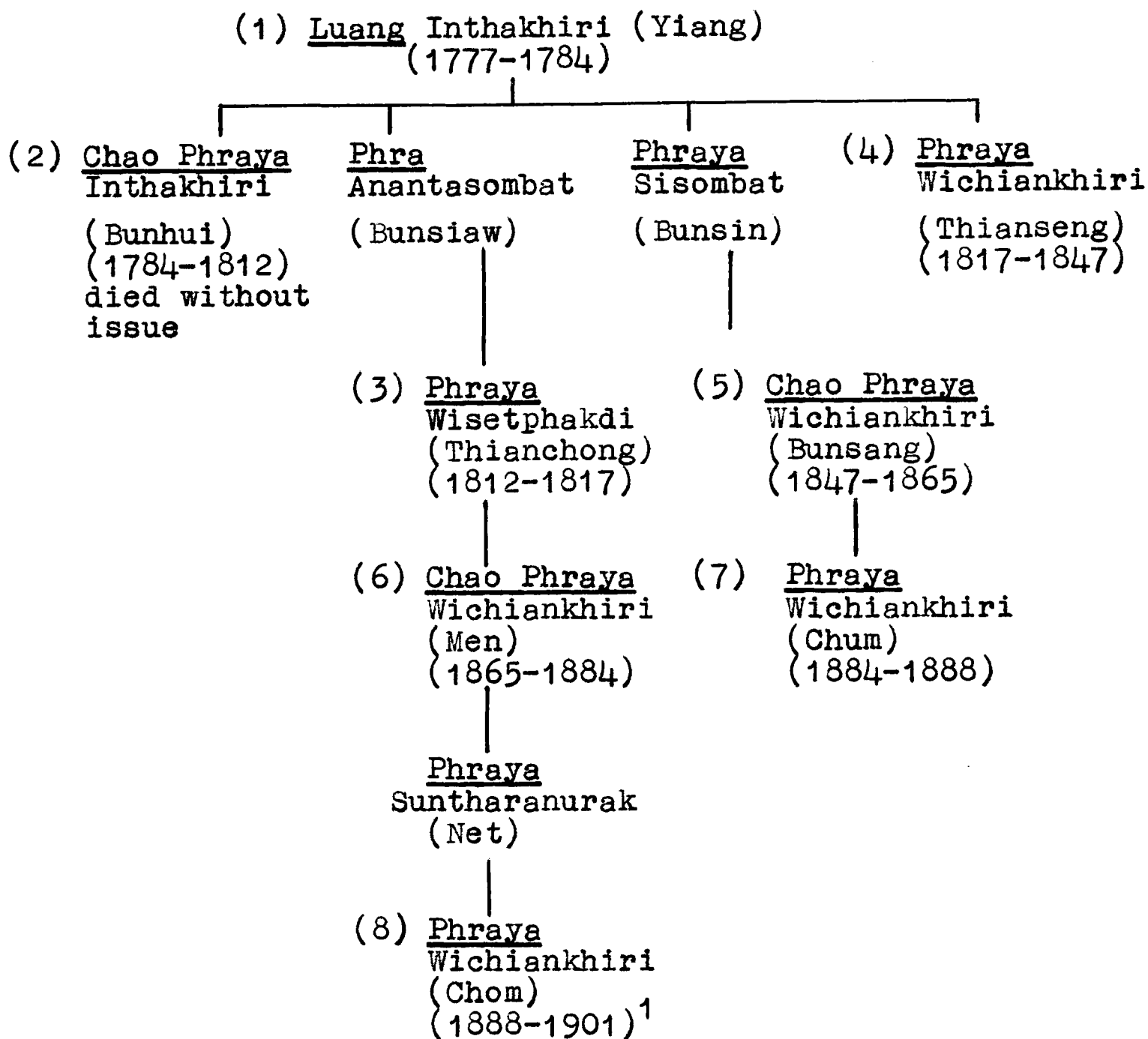
Once a family had established itself in a province, the government, for the sake of stability and continuity rarely removed it from its position. Maximum stability in internal politics was maintained by the fact that the governorship did not devolve on a minor, which meant that it did not necessarily pass from father to son. The governorship passed to the most influential member of the family who was usually a member of the senior generation. It could return to the senior branch of the family, if, in the interval, the heir, by right of primogeniture, had grown up, joined the local government, and became a political figure in his own right. The family tree of the Na Songkhla family, the rulers of Songkhla from 1777 to 1901, illustrates this system, although it is necessary to point out that this was not the only possible model of succession to the governorship, because power could have passed to another branch of the family so completely that the senior branch was never able to recover it.

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi Song, The Chronicle of the reign of King Loetla (Bangkok 1962), p. 240.

Table I

The genealogy of the Na Songkhla family

1777 - 1901



1. This genealogy is compiled from Phraya Winchiankhiri (Chom na Songkhla) 'Phongsawadan Muang Songkhla', in Phongsawadan Muang Songkhla lae Phatthalung, op.cit., pp. 1-61.

The lack of a centralized system of administration, which meant that towns and cities in the Kingdom were political and administrative centres in their own right, did not lead to the country's disintegration. The government was able to maintain unity by various ways and means and there were always certain factors in its favour. Firstly, it relied on the fact that its poverty and weakness was only relative and it could call upon considerable forces to overawe the provinces. It is important to realize that, throughout the nineteenth century, Bangkok and its surrounding provinces were the most densely populated area of the Kingdom.¹ In an emergency, the government could call on more able-bodied men to take arms than any local government. Secondly, the government could play on the fact that the Siamese and the Laos of the tributary states depended on Bangkok's support against such traditional foes as the Burmese and the Annamite.

The government's potential power meant that the administration of the provinces by the ministries in Bangkok was more than just a nominal supervision. Although the government left the basic autonomy of local government intact, it nevertheless demanded allegiance from the provinces in thought and deed. Provincial officials were required to swear their allegiance to the King twice a year in a ceremony called the

1. L. Sterstein, 'The Distribution of Thai Centres at Mid-nineteenth Century', Journal of Southeast Asian History, vii, (1966), 67-70.

ceremony of the Water of Allegiance. Having taken holy water, the officials gave their oath of loyalty to the crown.¹

The government also made the provinces demonstrate their loyalty in tangible ways. Each province was expected to send an annual tribute, the ngoen suai, to Bangkok. Ubonratchathani in the north-east had each year to send eight thousand baht to Bangkok.² In time of war, the provinces were expected to send contingents to join the main armies. When, in 1852, armies from Bangkok marched north to attack Chiangtung in the Shan States, contingents from all the provinces of the central plains joined them. The first class province of Phitsanulok sent eleven officers, two hundred men, and twenty elephants; and towns from which Phitsanulok commanded allegiance sent five officers and a hundred men.³

The government furthermore reserved the right to send commissioners, khaluang, into the provinces from time to time. Within the first few years of a King's accession to the throne, commissioners were sent out to tattoo and register

1. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphitan r.s.125', 'The Meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1906', Thesaphitan, ii, (1906), 40-43.

2. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 53.

3. Chotmai het ruang Thap Chiangtung, Documents concerning military campaigns against Kengtung, ed. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., pp. 10-37.

able-bodied men, to measure the rice fields, and to count the fruit-trees, so that the government would know whom it could mobilize and what it could tax in the years to come.¹ Commissioners were also sent to direct operations against bandits, when banditry got out of hand in a certain area of the country. Such commissioners were given authority to demand co-operation from all governors in the affected area, so that the bandits could not escape by slipping across provincial frontiers. In 1878, a commissioner established his head-quarters at Sangkha, a province adjoining the modern frontier with Cambodia, and demanded co-operation from the neighbouring provinces against the bandits of that region.² King Nang Klao, Rama III, once sent eight commissioners to Songkhla to make a cadastral survey of the province and to issue title deeds to the people. This event took place in 1828, but, as it is the only reference to such an undertaking, it cannot be said that the government regularly concerned itself with such a task.³

The government, by playing on the divisions in provincial

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., p. 68.

2. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 92.

3. Phraya Wichiankhiri (Chom na Songkhla), 'Phongsawadan Muang Songkhla', in Phongsawadan Muang Songkhla lae Phatthalung, op.cit., p. 22.

politics at every level, pursued a deliberate policy of not allowing one province to dominate an area of the country. The early history of the north-eastern province of Mahasarakham provides one of the best examples of how this policy worked in practice. In 1865, the government allowed the powerful governor of Roi-et to found a satellite town called Mahasarakham. Roi-et sent nine thousand people to populate the new town, and the governor sent his cousin to be its first governor. In 1868, the government declared, however, that Mahasarakham had become a province under the supervision of Bangkok and that its relationship with Roi-et had ended.¹ The government adroitly took advantage of the fact that, after three years, Mahasarakham no longer wished to be a satellite town and was strong enough to resist pressure from Roi-et. It profited from the situation in three ways. Firstly, by appearing as the champion of independence, it won the heartfelt loyalty of Mahasarakham. Secondly, it gained more revenue, for as a province in its own right, Mahasarakham had to send the annual tribute (ngoen suai) to Bangkok; this would have been popular with the people of the province, because the ngoen suai would have been lighter than the tributes they had had to send to Roi-et. Thirdly, it weakened Roi-et, which had been deprived of its resources in man-power and in revenue.

1. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., pp. 73-78.

The government did not merely take advantage of internal politics but also directly encouraged disruption in order to divide and rule the provinces. In 1872, for instance, it allowed the people of the north-east, if and when they wanted to, to migrate where they liked.¹ This was a revolutionary measure, for one of the traditional axioms of Siamese government and administration was that the people had no rights to change their masters.² The result, from the government's point of view, was extremely successful, for in 1874, 2700 people in turn left the province of Mahasarakham, and migrated to the town of Kantharawichai, a satellite-town of Kalasin.³ The government benefited from the situation in that, as the secession of Mahasarakham had weakened Roi-et, so the migration of about a quarter of its population debilitated Mahasarakham. The provincial balance of power had been maintained.

The government's potential power meant that ultimately it could dismiss a provincial governor. For most of the nineteenth century, this measure was considered so drastic that it was used only occasionally and the government always took care

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Laksana kan pokkhrong Prathet Sayam tae boran, Ancient Siamese government and administration (Bangkok 1963), pp. 15-21.

2. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 81.

3. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 87.

to justify itself. Governors were dismissed if their continuance in office constituted a danger to national security. In 1824, King Nang Klao, Rama III, dismissed the governor of Chanthaburi because the man was unpopular and, at the shaky beginning of his reign, he was anxious to do anything to please the people.¹ He replaced him by a certain Luang Kaeo Ayat (Muang Bunnag) in order presumably to please the Bunnags upon whom depended the security of his throne.² Two years later, the governor of Chumphon was dismissed for diplomatic reasons. During the First Anglo-Burmese War, which lasted from 1822 to 1825, Chumphon had attacked the southern Burmese province of Mergui and had taken its people as prisoners of war. As the new ruler of Lower Burma, the British had asked the governor to return the captives but the request had been refused. When in 1826, the British ambassador, Henry Burney, came to settle this and other disputes, the Siamese, fearful of the Power which had just defeated Burma, agreed to send the people of Mergui back to their homeland, and, as the governor

1. Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong (Kham Bunnag), Phraratchaphong-sawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi Sam, The Chronicle of the reign of King Nang Klao (Bangkok 1963), i, 10-11.

2. Natthawut Sutthisongkhram, op.cit., p.81. It is necessary to point out that the take-over of Phetburi and Chanthaburi by the Bunnag family in c. 1869 and 1824 was exceptional. It was a testament of the Bunnags' extraordinary position in the politics of the time rather than an attempt by the government to implement the Law of 1802 which had theoretically but not actually centralized the provincial administration.

of chumphon had been guilty of the transgression, he was dismissed.¹ The last example, is provided by the western province of Kanchanaburi, where five out of ten governors were dismissed between 1782 and 1892. The government was fully justified in making sure of the loyalty and efficiency of the governor of this strategic town, which controlled the western frontier between Siam and her traditional enemy, Burma.²

The reason why the government was wary of dismissing governors was its fear that the new man would be faced with too strong an opposition from the former ruling family. In Songkhla, for instance, in 1786, nine years after the change in governorship, there was an uprising led by the son of the deposed governor, which lasted for four months before it was put down.³ In Phatthalung, the change in 1826 took place peacefully, for the members of the old ruling family were content to register their protest by leaving the town.⁴ The government as a rule dismissed governors as rarely as possible, and when it did so, it made sure either that its action was

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1. Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong (Kham Bunnag), op.cit., 36-39.
 2. Samut Ratburi, A Guide to Ratburi (Bangkok 1925) pp. 78-80.
 3. Phraya Wichiankhiri (Chom na Songkhla) op.cit., pp.6-11.
 4. Luang Siworawat (Phin Chantharothawong), op.cit., p. 92.

completely justifiable, or that the balance of power in a particular province had definitely shifted to the new man, so that unrest in the provinces would be avoided.

If the government had to deal with only the inner and the outer provinces, the old provincial administration would not have been too complicated. Beyond the provinces, however, were the tributary states, whose relationship with the government was different from that between the latter and the provinces. Where there was a just balance, based on a tacit agreement of give and take, between Bangkok and the provinces, the relationship between the capital and the tributary states, owing to various circumstances, tended to be strained and liable to snap at any moment.

The relationship between the government and the tributary states did not have a solid foundation, because unlike the inner provinces, these states did not form the original core of the Kingdom of Siam. They owed allegiance to Siam, because, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, they had been unable to withstand Siamese military power. After the ignominious defeat at the hands of the Burmese in 1767, the Siamese not only drove out their erstwhile conquerors but also embarked on territorial expansion in all directions. The three Principalities of the north, Chiangmai, Lampang, and Lamphun, declared their independence from the Burmese and their

allegiance to Siam in 1774.¹ The Kingdom of Luang Prabang declared its allegiance in that same year.² In 1778, Siamese armies over-ran the Principalities of Vientiane and Bassac on the pretext that these states had conspired to destroy the township of Don Motdaeng, whose rulers, Phra Wo and Phra Ta, former noblemen of Vientiane, had declared their allegiance to Bangkok.³ While Annam was wracked by the Tayson Rebellion, Siam, in 1782, forced Cambodia to accept her suzerainty.⁴ The Sultanates of the south, Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, and Pattani, were brought within the Siamese sphere of influence after Siamese armies had campaigned in the south in 1785.⁵ The northern Principality of Nan declared its independence of Burma and its allegiance to Siam in 1788.⁶

The government's relationship with those states, which had declared their allegiance voluntarily, was peaceful, but

1. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Run Siphen), op.cit., p.2.

2. Phongsawadan Muang Luang Prabang, The Chronicle of Luang Prabang (Prachum Phongsawadan, xi, 1919) 35-44.

3. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., pp. 31-34.

4. Chao Phraya Khathathon Thoranin, Phongsawadan Muang Phra-tabong, The Chronicle of Battambang (Prachum Phongsawadan, xvi, 1919), p.1.

5. Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong, (Kham Bunnag), Phraratchaphong-sawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi Nung, The Chronicle of the reign of King Phra Phutthayotfa (Bangkok 1960), i, 145.

6. Phra Chao Suriyaphong Pharidet, Phongsawadan Muang Nan, The Chronicle of Nan (Prachum Phongsawadan, x, 1918), p.150.

the one with those which had been brought under its sphere of influence by force was very strained. In what it thought were the interests of national security, the government dealt with some of the states in a very cavalier fashion. In 1791, in order to weaken the rebellious tributary state of Pattani, the Sultanate was split into seven tributary provinces (Khaek Chet Huamuang, or Seven Malay Provinces), which were put under the supervision of Songkhla.¹ The provinces of Battambang and Siamriap, constituting one-third of Cambodia, were put under the direct supervision of Bangkok in order to weaken that Kingdom in 1794.² Between 1778 and 1821, the prestige and morale of the Principality of Bassac were broken, for its ruling dynasty was expelled and outsiders were installed as its new rulers.³ In 1821, troops from Nakhon Sithammarat overran the Sultanate of Kedah, which was under the city's own supervision, and chased the Sultan out of his country. The governor of Nakhon Sithammarat justified the action by accusing the Sultan of high treason, maintaining that Kedah had opened negotiation with Burma with a view to changing its allegiance.⁴

1. Phraya Wichiankhiri (Chom na Songkhla), Phongsawadan Muang Pattani, The Chronicle of Pattani (Prachum Phongsawadan, iii, 1913), p. 1-30.

2. Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong (Kham Bunnag), op.cit., i, 243.

3. Anon., 'Prawat Muang Nakhon Champasak', 'The History of Bassac', Thesaphiban, iv (1907), 1-33.

4. Chotmai Luang Udom Sombat, The Letters of Luang Udom Sombat ed. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap (Bangkok 1913), p. 13.

Under such circumstances, it was not surprising that the government met with open rebellions from the tributary states. Between 1823 and 1842, there was a constant state of insurgency in Kedah, which spread into the seven provinces of Pattani between 1829 and 1832. The uprising in the provinces of Pattani was crushed; but the government had to reinstate the Sultan of Kedah in 1842.¹ In the east, Siamese suzerainty over Cambodia was only intermittently effective. By 1813, after the Cambodian King had sought the protection of Annam, Siam had to recognise Annam's joint protectorate over Cambodia. Cambodia in fact passed out of the Siamese sphere of influence altogether soon afterwards. It was only as a result of Annamite oppression, which led the Cambodians to rebel against them sporadically from 1820 to 1845 and the civil war between Saigon and Hue in 1830, that the Siamese were enabled to re-establish their protectorate over Cambodia in 1847.²

The most dangerous challenge to the government from a tributary state came from the Principality of Vientiane when it was ruled by Chao Anu. In 1826, Chao Anu, using the opportunity of the shaky beginning of King Nang Klao's reign, struck a blow for Vientiane's independence and perhaps even

1. ibid., pp. 33-44, and p. 436.

2. Ratchaphongsawadan Kamphucha, The Chronicle of Cambodia (Bangkok 1917), pp. 208-278.

dominance of the central Mekong. In that year, armies from Vientiane and Bassac, which was ruled by Chao Anu's son, Chao Yo, swept from the Mekong towards Bangkok. The vanguards of these forces reached Saraburi before they retreated. The government retaliated in the most savage manner, for, when Vientiane was captured, its people were driven off as slaves of war, its walls demolished, its trees cut, and finally it was burnt. The existence of the Principality was extinguished. The Principality of Bassac was given to the governor of Attapue, who had demonstrated his loyalty in Bangkok by attacking Chao Anu and Chao Yo in the rear in the last stages of the war.¹

Although the government was successful in establishing its military dominance, it had to allow the tributary states more independence in internal affairs than that given to the provinces. The tributary states, like the provinces, had control over the personnel of their own governments. At the top, the government allowed succession to the Principality to pass to the most influential member of the family. This meant that, as in Songkhla, it passed from one member of the senior generation to another, until that generation had died out and

1. Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong (Kham Bunnag) Phraratchaphong-sawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi Sam, The Chronicle of the reign of King Nang Klao (Bangkok 1963), i, 39-93.

then to the most influential member of the next generation. The succession was not, however, legitimate, until the government had officially recognized it by sending the new ruler his insignia of office. The ruler then recommended the government to appoint his relations to the most senior offices in his administration, the Upparat, Ratchawong, Ratchabut, and Burirat in the northern tributary states and the Raja Muda, Perdana Menteri, Temenggong, and Bendahara in the southern Malay tributary states. When, in 1856, King Mongkut, Rama IV, had to pass over the obvious candidate for the position of Upparat of Chiangmai, because the Princes of Chiangmai and Lamphun, and the Upparat of Lampang disliked him, he explained the position of the government in these terms,

'When appointing the Upparat and the Ratchawong for Chiamgmai, which is a great tributary state with borders adjoining British Burma, we have to give way to the opinions of the Prince of Chiangmai and his cousins the princes of the neighbouring states, for that is the only way to ensure that there will be no internal divisions.'¹

The ruler did not have to make recommendation to the government in order to appoint junior officials to his administration.

The government allowed a tributary state to have more independence in its financial administration than that given

1. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Run Siphen), op.cit, p.19.

to the provinces. As in the provinces, the administration of a tributary state collected its own taxes. In Kelantan, in 1884, taxes were levied on opium, liquor, coconut-oil, medicine, and dried fish. There was a triennial poll tax on the Chinese; and the common people had to give service or to commute it in cash or in kind to the administration.¹ In 1827, the people of Bassac were divided between those who contributed actual service to the state and those who commuted their service in cash, ivory, or in cardamom seeds.² The fiscal administration of a tributary state was more independent than that of the provinces, by the fact that the tributary states were free of the tax-farmers from the capital whom the governors had to admit into their provinces.

The revenue of a tributary state was divided between its officials. In Bassac, it was the Prince who kept to himself the ivory which had been given in lieu of service; and it was the Upparat who took the cardamom seeds.³ The officials, like their counterparts in Bangkok and in the provinces, were allotted a number of people for their personal service. In 1884, the retired Sultan of Kelantan, who was eighty years old, was allowed to keep two hundred fully armed retainers.⁴

1. Prince Phanurangsi, op.cit., pp. 82-84.

2. and 3. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 53.

4. Prince Phanurangsi, op.cit., pp. 79-80.

The government allowed as much independence over the judicial administration to a tributary state as it did to the provinces. Prince Phichit Prichakon, the royal commissioner to the north in 1884, described the Principality of Lampang's judicial administration in these terms;

'All the children and relations of the Prince are wicked, for all of them have full power to rob and to kill whomever they like...When the murdered man does not belong to the Prince's family, the case is not brought to court.'¹

The inviolability of the princes did not mean that there was no rule of law in the tributary states. Prince Phanurangsi, when he was on holiday in the south in 1884, remarked that robbery was rare in Kelantan because the punishments were so savage. The first offence was punished by flogging, the second by cutting off the fingers, and the third by a death sentence.² All the rulers of the tributary states had the power of life and death over their people.

As the tributary states were far away and as they bordered foreign countries, the government had to tolerate their ability to conduct their own foreign policy. When the government was relatively weak, tributary states could take advantage of the fact that they were buffer states between Siam and her

1. M.1/71: Phichit Prichakon to Chulalongkorn 14 May 1884.

2. Prince Phanurangsi, op.cit., pp. 85-86.

neighbours, and did their best to play them off against one another. The Kingdom of Cambodia was the most adroit exponent of this method of diplomacy in the first half of the nineteenth century. After Cambodia had been under Siamese suzerainty for twenty nine years, the Annamite faction at court gained predominance in 1811. From 1813 to 1845, the country was under Annamite protectorate, which was overthrown as a result of popular discontent and open rebellions against Annamite rule. From 1847 to 1867, Cambodia was once more in the Siamese sphere of influence; but at the end of that period, the Cambodians changed their minds again, and were forced to accept French protectorate.¹ The government could do nothing to stop Cambodia's inconstancy, because, unless Annam was weak, Siam was never strong enough to put down the combined Annamite and Cambodian forces.

The government encouraged a tributary state to have its own foreign policy if it suited Siam's national interests. The expansion of Luang Prabang was beneficial because it meant that the area of a loyal buffer state had been increased. In this way, the government welcomed Luang Prabang's acquisition of suzerainty over Chiangrung (Kenghung) in the Sipsong Panna and Muang Thaeng (Dien Bien Phu) in the Sipsong Chu Thai in

1. Ratchaphongsawadan Kamphucha, The Chronicle of Cambodia pp. 208-278.

1856 and 1884 respectively. The rulers of these territories needed Luang Prabang's help against their neighbours. In the case of Chiangrung, help was needed so that its independence could be maintained against the Shan state of Chiangtung.¹ Muang Thaeng's independence was threatened by Muang Lai or Lai Chau.² The central government's approval was assured by Luang Prabang's diplomatic courtesy, for these rulers were asked to swear their allegiance and to send triennial tributes to Bangkok.

On the other hand, the government used all its power against tributary states, whose independent foreign policy was or could have been detrimental to the Kingdom's security. It crushed Vientiane, whose ruler, Chao Anu, when preparing for his attack on Siam in 1826, ceded his own tributaries, the Hua Phan Thang Ha Thang Hok, to the Annamites, in order to obtain their neutrality and tacit support. After Anu's defeat, these territories were given to Luang Prabang.³ In 1863, the Prince of Chiangmai, accused of conducting secret negotiation with the Burmese court at Ava, was brought down to Bangkok. The government must have been frightened that

1. Mahachai Muang Phong, Phongsawadan Muang Chiangrung, The Chronicle of Kenghung (Prachum Phongsawadan, ix, 1918), p. 21.

2. Phraya Ritthirong Ronnachet, Phongsawadan Muang Thaeng, The Chronicle of Dien Bien Phu (Prachum Phongsawadan, ix, 1918), pp. 76-111.

3. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Ruang Prap Ho, The Suppression of the Hos (Prachum Phongsawadan, xxiv, 1922), p. 3.

the northern principalities were about to change their allegiance and to revert to being tributary states of Burma, in which case, Siam's northern frontier would have become as vulnerable as it had been before 1774. The danger was fortunately averted, for the Prince, chastened by the discomforts of the journey to the capital, presented his rightful sovereign with the gifts he had received from Ava and was allowed to go back to his Principality.¹

Apart from the sensitive issue of foreign policy, the government interfered with the administration of the tributary states less than it did with that of the provinces. It did not send commissioners, khaluang, to register their able-bodied men, or to put down violent outbreaks of banditry, or to make cadastral surveys. Its relationship with the tributary states was strictly confined to exacting slight fiscal and military obligations. The government expected the princes and the nobility of these states to drink the Water of Allegiance twice a year,² and to demonstrate their loyalty by sending annually or triennially tribute, khruang ratchabannakan, in the forms of gold and silver trees and some local produce.

1. Phraya Maha-Ammattayathibodi (Run Siphon), op.cit., pp. 21-22.

2. 'Phithi thu nam nai muang prathetsarat khrang ratchakan thi si', 'The ceremony of the Water of Allegiance in the tributary states in the reign of King Mongkut', Thesaphiban, xii, (1912), 314-323.

The Principality of Bassac, for instance, sent triennially a gold tree weighing one and a half kilogram, a silver tree of the same weight, 120 kilograms of ivory and 240 kilograms of cardamom seeds. In addition, it also sent annually 8000 baht of tribute money (ngoeng suai).¹ The size of gold and silver trees varied according to the wealth of particular states. The Sultan of Kelantan's trees were the biggest, being ten feet and five inches in height; those of the Lord of Borikhannikhom, a small tributary province in southern Laos, were only two feet high.² Without knowing the value of gold and silver in nineteenth century south-east Asia, it is hard to calculate the value of these trees. It has been estimated that the trees from the Sultanates of Kedah, Kelantan, and Trengganu, known as the Bunga Mas, were worth approximately £1000 each on the average.³ King Chulalongkorn, Rama V, scorned the glitter of these tributes, for he knew that they bore no relations to the value of the revenue of these states. He reckoned that they were not worth one-eighth or one-ninth of the Gold and Silver Trees Tax levied on the people.⁴

1. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 53.

2. Ratchakitchanubeksa, The Royal Gazette, vii (1891), 218-219. (Hereafter referred to as RKB.)

3. W.F. Vella, Siam under Rama III (New York 1957), footnotes, p. 60.

4. M.28/21: Damrong to Thewawong 1/1 31 March, 1897.

Apart from this fiscal relationship, the tributary states were also expected to send military contingents in time of war. When, in 1852, armies from Bangkok marched north to join the armies of Chiangmai, Lampang, and Lamphun in an attack on the Shan state of Chiangtung, a commissioner went to Nan and Phrae to help them mobilize their men.¹

Although the system of provincial administration before the great reforms of the 1890s was viable, this does not mean to say that it was at any moment entirely sufficient for all the needs of the government. Muddles and delays did not occur just because there was little functional differentiation between the ministries but within the ministries themselves the bureaucratic organization was extremely inefficient. In 1891, the Prime Minister for civil administration's Ministry of the North (the Mahatthai) had a staff of twenty officials and sixty-six clerks. The ministry was divided into four divisions; the Duty (Wain), Tributes (Lek Suai), Permanent Under-Secretary's (Palat Thun Chalong), and Finance (Boek Chai) Divisions.²

This departmental neatness belies the fact that the machinery of administration turned slowly because of faulty

1. Chotmaihet Ruang Thap Chiangtung, Documents concerning military campaigns against Kengtung, ed. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., pp. 8-10.

2. M.10/19: Sisahathep to Rattanakobodin, 5/924 31 January, 1891.

bureaucratic principles. Most correspondence was delayed in its passage through the Duty Division. This division was divided into four rotas, each of which was on twenty-four hour duty for five days at a time, during which period it received all correspondence, directed it to the divisions concerned, and sent replies back to the provinces and tributary states. But since each rota, instead of helping each other, only dealt with the correspondence which it received during its period of duty, each accumulated its own pile of unfinished work. Furthermore, the efficiency of the ministry was not helped by the fact that the executive officials, who had risen in the civil service as a result of family connections rather than by acquiring administrative talents, observed little or no differentiation in the functions of the divisions. Combined with bad communications, which kept correspondence on the road for months, the administrative machinery could work only at a very slow pace.¹ The cumulative effect of muddles and delays was the government's inability to be stringent in its dealings with the provinces. The provinces were allowed to get far behind in their payment of the tribute money (ngoen suai). In 1891, the town of Kamalasai in the north-east was ten years behind when

1. M.10/19: Damrong to Rattanakobodin, S67/72 18 April 1891.

it sent its tribute money for the years from 1875 to 1880.¹

The viability of the old system of provincial administration was tested by Chao Anu of Vientiane's Rebellion in 1826 and was found wanting. From Vientiane on the Mekong, Chao Anu's armies reached Saraburi, only three days' march from Bangkok, because the provinces, far from protecting the capital, collapsed before their advance. The governors of such strategic provinces as Ubonratchathani, Suwannaphum, and Roi-et, capitulated without any resistance. Other provinces which resisted were then out-flanked and over-run.² Communications were so bad that, although many of the towns in the north-east had already fallen, Chao Anu's troops were still able to pass unmolested through Nakhon Ratchasima by telling the garrison that they were on their way to protect Bangkok against an attack by sea by the British.³ The early success of Chao Anu also meant that disaffection spread to the other tributary states. Except for Nan, the states of the north were slow in responding to the government's request for

1. National Archives, Bangkok, Fifth Reign, Ministry of the Interior, Samnao Nangsu Ratchakan mi pai Hua-muang khun Mahatthai r.s.110. A ledger containing copies of correspondence between the Mahatthai and the provinces under its supervision in 1891. Mahatthai to Phakdinarong 3 April 1891. (Hereafter referred to as Samnao Nangsu Ratchakan...Mahatthai 1891.)

2. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 50.

3. Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong (Kham Bunnag), op.cit., i, 42-43.

military assistance; and their contingents did not join Bangkok's armies until the issue was no longer in any doubt.¹ This experience illustrated the aptness of the axiom that, 'the authority of the King varied inversely with the distance from the capital.'²

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the government's military power had kept the Kingdom together but, as the century progressed, new problems arose which necessitated a more sophisticated approach to provincial administration. There were Chinese labour disputes in the southern mining towns of Ranong and Phuket, which broke out into open rebellions against the authorities in 1876.³ Problems were also complicated by the nearness and involvement of the Great Powers, France and Great Britain. Disputes over timber rights between British Burmese subjects and the Chiangmai princes in 1871 could have led to direct British intervention in order to guarantee British interests.⁴

1. ibid., i, 62.

2. W.A. Graham, Siam (London 1924), i, 321.

3. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Ruang Tamnan Muang Ranong, The History of Ranong, op.cit., pp. 30-43; and for the uprising in Phuket, Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Prawat Bukkhon Samkhan Chabap Sombun, Biographies of Important Men (Bangkok 1962) Prawat Phraya Montri Suriyawong (Chuen Bunnag), pp. 171-174.

4. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Run Siphon), op.cit., pp. 29-30.

The government found that the weakest point in its provincial administration was the tributary states. With the advent of French power in Indochina, Cambodia began to use her position as a buffer state to play France off against Siam from 1848 onwards; and in 1867 she accepted a French Protectorate.¹ In northern Laos, from 1865 onwards, bands of Chinese bandits (the Hos), remnants of the Taiping Rebellion in China, ravaged the Sipsong Panna, Sipsong Chu Thai, and the Hua Phan Thang Ha Thang Hok. The Kingdom of Luang Prabang's inability to restore law and order left a vacuum, which France endeavoured to fill as soon as Tongking became a French protectorate in 1884.² In central Laos, the extirpation of the Principality of Vientiane in 1827 had left another power vacuum, for there was no authority to hold the frontier on the Annamite Cordillera against French Annam.³

The government, under these circumstances, had to intervene directly in the affairs of the tributary states in order to defend them and the Kingdom. The defence of the Kingdom

1. P. Duke, op.cit., pp. 11-61.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Ruang Prap Ho, The Suppression of the Hos (Prachum Phongswadan, xxiv, 1922), pp. 1-2.

3. D.K. Wyatt, 'Siam and Laos, 1767-1827', Journal of Southeast Asian History, iv (1963), 13-32.

could, however, only be effective if all the resources of the country could be mobilized. This in turn entailed the reform of both the central government and the provincial administration, for, so long as the old systems survived, the government would not be able to use to the full the resources of the country in man-power and revenue. The key to the reform of the provincial administration lay in centralization; and the chief difficulty lay in the opposition from those who had deeply rooted interests in the old system of administration. External pressure was, however, going to unite the country behind the King. Combined with the fact that King Chulalongkorn was to make the monarchy extremely powerful between 1868 and 1892, the government was going to be able to promulgate and to gradually implement reforms between 1892 and 1915.

Chapter II

External Pressure and Early Reforms

The forces which were pressing for reforms, between 1868 and 1892, were the King's frustration with his lack of power, and the government's inability to protect efficiently the territorial integrity of the Kingdom against the encroachments of the Great Powers, France and Great Britain. The great reforms came in the 1890s, but, had the government not prepared the way for them by a series of minor reforms in the preceding years, it would not have been possible for them to take place. The reform of the provincial administration can be traced back to the 1870s, and it in turn was made possible by preliminary reforms in the central government. Since the close relationship between these factors can lead to confusion, they will be treated separately for the sake of clarity. It will be seen that, when, Prince Damrong Rachanuphap became the Minister for the North, the Mahatthai, in 1892, some of the ground had already been cleared in preparation for the laying of the foundation for a centralized provincial administration.

Siam's relationship with France and Great Britain

In the nineteenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth century, Siam suffered from the power of European nations in various ways. Faced with overwhelming military power, Siam, in the 1850s, felt compelled to sign treaties which took away her financial and judicial independence. This, however, failed to give her absolute security, for she continued to feel that her territorial integrity and her very independence were dependent upon the will of France and Great Britain.

Siam began to feel the presence of Great Britain in the 1820s, when British power thwarted her southern and western territorial expansion, which had constituted her counter-offensive against the Burmese in the last decades of the eighteenth century and in the first decade of the nineteenth century.¹ In 1822, the Governor-General of India sent an ambassador, John Crawfurd, with instructions to negotiate a commercial treaty with Siam, but, in reality, to make complaints, on behalf of the British merchants in Penang, against the Siamese invasion of Kedah in 1821.² The British

1. There had been intercourse between Siam and England in the seventeenth century.

2. J. Crawfurd, Journal of an Embassy From the Governor General of India to the Courts of Siam and CochinChina (Istedn, London 1828), pp. 159-160.

were alarmed by the Siamese occupation of Kedah, for their rights to the island of Penang might be rendered null and void, since the Sultan of Kedah had ceded the island and the strip of territory on the mainland known as Province Wellesley to the East India Company in respectively 1786 and 1800 without informing his suzerain, the King of Siam.¹ On that occasion, however, the negotiation were fruitless, for the Siamese felt insulted by Crawford, who, according to the Chronicles, said that the Kingdom was weak and its capital could be taken with only a few British warships.² This problem was settled four years later, when the Governor-General of India sent Henry Burney to Bangkok in 1825. By that time, Siam was in a much more receptive mood, for the British had just easily won the first Anglo-Burmese War; a feat which seemed prodigious in Siamese eyes. Malloch, a merchant who lived in Bangkok from 1824 to 1827, noted that,

'The result of the Burmese war has made a total revolution in their ideas of British power, which from the reports of the junks from Penang and Singapore they have hitherto considered trifling.'³

1. J. Kennedy, A History of Malaya, A.D. 1400-1959 (London 1962), pp. 74-79.

2. Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong, (Kham Bunnag) Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi Sam, The Chronicle of the reign of King Nang Klao (Bangkok 1963), i, 146-148.

3. D.E. Malloch, Journal: 1827 (The Burney Papers, ii, 1911) p. 224.

The effect of the treaty signed in 1826 was to divide Malaya into Siamese and British spheres of influence, the frontier of which ran along the southern boundaries of the Sultanates of Kedah, Kelantan, and Trengganu.¹ The British annexation of Lower Burma in 1825 also halted Siamese expansion to the west. The Siamese governor of Chumphon had to send the people of Mergui, a little Burmese port on the Bay of Bengal, whom he had captured on a raid, back to their home.²

After this inauspicious beginning, Siam understandably felt that her territorial integrity was threatened by Great Britain. Her fears were confirmed, when, in 1862, British warships shelled the coastal forts of the Siamese tributary state of Trengganu, in order to warn the Sultan against interfering in the internal politics of Pahang, a Malay state within the British sphere of influence.³ A little over a decade later, Siam felt more than ever that Britain was threatening her territorial integrity. In the south, she watched, from 1873 onwards, the establishment of British administration, which was later known as the 'Residential System', in the mainland Malay states of Pahang, Perak,

1. J.M. Gullick, Malaya (London, 1963), p.29.

2. Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong (Kham Bunnag), op.cit., i, 10-11.

3. Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong (Kham Bunnag), Praratchaphong-sawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi Si, The Chronicle of the reign of King Mongkut (Bangkok, 1961), ii, 26-29.

Negri Sembilan, and Selangor. The British took this action in order to ensure that the development of the nascent tin-mining industry would no longer be impeded by the chronic political instability of the Malay states. They swept aside opposition by force in the Anglo-Perak War of 1874 and 1875.¹ In the same period, Siam faced the possibility of a British intervention in the tributary states of the north. The British had a ready excuse for taking such an action, for the maladministration of contracts concerning timber rights between the local princes and Burmese subjects from British Lower Burma was impeding the growth of the teak industry in that region.²

In spite of her fears, however, Siam also looked increasingly to Britain for support against France. In the period which saw the rise of French power in Cochinchina and Cambodia, Siam conducted her diplomacy through British Consuls in London, Rangoon, and Singapore. The young King Chulalongkorn paid state visits to British Penang and Singapore in 1871 and to British India in 1872. Siam employed British officers in her army and navy, and hired British engineers to construct new fortifications for Bangkok. At court, the

1. J.M. Gullick, op.cit., pp. 35-39.

2. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Run Siphon), Phongsawadan Muang Nakhon Chiangmai Muang Nakhon Lampang Muang Lamphun, The Chronicle of Chiangmai, Lampang, and Lamphun (Prachum Phongsawadan, iii, 1962), pp. 29-30.

King, who had once had an English governess, Anna Leonowens, employed an Englishman, F.G. Patterson, as language tutor to his brothers and half brothers.¹ Siam's anglophilia was well rewarded on one level, for She obtained from Britain fiscal concessions in 1883, and judicial concessions in 1874 and 1883.

Although Siam was to be disappointed in the expectation that Britain would support her against France, she nevertheless continued to be anglophile. When the crisis of 1893 came, Britain did not help Siam to retain her tributary states east of the Mekong River, all of which were annexed by France. Britain, however, did not fall in Siamese estimation, for her unwillingness to see the country a French possession and her desire to have a buffer state between British territories and those of France ultimately guaranteed the Kingdom's independence.² Diplomatic courtesy was another factor which made sure that Siam willingly entered the British sphere of influence. At a time when Siam was being humiliated by France, the Siamese appreciated such gestures as the government of the Federated Malay States asking its permission to send a police force into the

1. P. Duke, Les Relations entre la France et la Thaïlande au XIX Siècle (Bangkok, 1962), pp. 55-72.

2. P. Duke, op.cit., (Bangkok 1962), pp. 67-73, pp. 157-164, and pp. 234-235.

tributary state of Trengganu in order to arrest trouble-making political exiles from Pahang in 1895.¹

After her initial contact with Great Britain in the 1820s, Siam decided, in the 1850s, that the best way to avoid giving offence to European nations was to grant them financial and judicial privileges. In its negotiations with Henry Burney, in 1826, the government had agreed to open Siam to free trade; but the terms of that agreement, apart from being unsatisfactory from the British point of view, had also been violated. The unsatisfactory terms were those which prohibited the import of opium and the export of rice.² The agreement to abolish monopolies in the buying and selling of goods was violated when the government granted a sugar monopoly in 1842.³ However, as the outcome of the first Anglo-Burmese War had made the Siamese more accommodating towards the British in 1826, so the British victory over China in the Opium Wars hastened the opening of Siam to free trade. Commencing with the Treaty of Commerce and Friendship with Great Britain, commonly known as Sir John Bowring's Treaty,

1. J. Kennedy, op.cit., p. 244.

2. Text of the Commercial Treaty of 1826 concluded between the Kingdom of Siam and the Government of India (The Burney Papers, i, 1910), pp. 385-387.

3. R. Hunter, A Memorandum to the Government of India (The Burney Papers, iv, 1914), p. 31.

in 1855, Siam, using the Treaty of Nanking of 1842 as a model, signed identical treaties with all the major European nations.

By these treaties, Siam did, however, sign away her financial independence. First of all, Article VIII of the Treaty froze the import tax at three per cent ad valorem. It also froze all other taxes in the country, because it allowed only one tax, which was fixed at the 1855 rates, in the form of an excise tax, or an inland transit duty, or an export tax, to come between the manufacture of a certain product and its exportation. Furthermore, Article XI stipulated that the Treaty could not be revised for a period of ten years after its ratification.¹ Any revision of the Treaty proved, however, extremely difficult. Between 1855 and 1925, the only changes in the commercial clauses of the Treaty took place in 1883 and 1906. In 1883, Great Britain and Portugal, in order to help the Siamese government's campaign against alcoholism, the result of excessive drinking of cheap spirits from Hong Kong and Macao, agreed that the import tax on spirits produced in those areas should be raised to ten per cent advalorem.² In 1906, when Great Britain agreed that the

1. Sir John Bowring, The Kingdom and the People of Siam; with a Narrative of the Mission to that Country in 1855 (London 1857), ii, 214-226.

2. P. Duke, op.cit., p. 87.

tax on land owned by British subjects could be raised to the rates of British Burma, the Siamese government was able to revise the land tax of the rest of the country.¹

Siam lost not only her financial but also her judicial independence. Article II of the Treaty gave subjects of the signatory nations the right to remain under their own laws, which were administered by their consuls.² This privilege of extraterritoriality could easily be and often was abused.

It was not just the Europeans and their Asian subjects who enjoyed the privilege, for many Chinese acquired foreign papers in order to avoid paying taxes and to escape the administration of justice. Between 1855 and the 1920s, changes in the judicial clauses of the Treaty took place in 1874 and 1883. In 1874, Great Britain placed her Asian subjects without proper British papers, who resided in Chiangmai, Lampang, and Lamphun, under Siamese Laws. In 1883, she placed all her Asian subjects under Siamese laws, on the condition that they be tried in an International Court, at which a consul, with the right to revoke cases to the consular court, would be present.³ The French did make such an

1. J.C. Ingram, Economic Change in Thailand since 1850 (Stanford, 1955), p.77.

2. Sir John Bowring, op.cit., pp. 214-226.

3. P. Duke, op.cit., pp. 90-97.

agreement with Siam until 1907.¹ Siam did not regain complete judicial autonomy until the 1930s.

Financial and judicial concessions, however, gave Siam little security, and, in the second half of the nineteenth century, her territorial integrity was increasingly threatened by France. From their capture of Tourane and Saigon in 1857 and 1859 respectively, and their annexation of Cochinchina between 1859 and 1867, the French steadily crept towards the Siamese tributary states of Cambodia, Bassac, and Luang Prabang. The French wanted to annex Cambodia, because the possession of that country which bordered the Mekong River on the west, would secure the north-western frontier of Cochinchina. An additional reason was Cochinchina's need for Cambodian beef.² The Cambodians, on the other hand, welcomed the French for probably the same reason as when they welcomed the Vietnamese and the Siamese into their country in 1811 and 1845. They probably hoped that by playing their neighbours off against one another once again, they would regain their independence. History, however, repeated itself, for, as on the two previous occasions, Cambodia fell to the stronger neighbour, and, in 1867, France annexed her as a Protectorate.³

1. ibid., pp. 266-270

2. ibid., p. 32-44

3. ibid., pp. 45-61.

When Annam became a French protectorate in 1884, Siam's suzerainty over the Kingdom of Luang Prabang and the Principality of Bassac was seriously imperilled. The French were interested in these states, because they originally thought that the Mekong River was the way by which to penetrate southern China. Their interest had waned a little when Doudart de Lagrée and Francis Garnier, in their expedition of 1866-1868, showed that the river was not navigable in many stretches, and when Jean Dupuis, in 1873, opened the way into southern China by his voyage up the Red River.¹ These states, nevertheless, continued to attract attention, for, even if the Mekong River could not become an international waterway, their resources and markets remained to be exploited by France.

Siam found herself at a great disadvantage in her efforts to resist French pressure on her tributary states on the Mekong River. Her efforts were hampered by the fact that she did not directly rule these states, the governments of which were responsible for the defence of the frontier. Owing to bad communications over mountainous terrain, this responsibility devolved on the petty principalities on the frontier with Tongking and Annam. These princelings were, however,

1. D. Lancaster, The Emancipation of French Indochina (London 1961), pp. 44-46.

untrustworthy. Their allegiance was so undependable that the Siamese called them the 'Princes of the two skies'. In order to appease their powerful neighbours, they sent tributes to both Bangkok and Hué.¹ The fact that they sent tributes to Hué enabled France to lay claims on them as 'dependencies' of Annam.² The situation was worsened by the lack of a scientifically defined frontier, and Luang Prabang's inability to put down the Chinese bandits, known as the Hos, who, from 1865 onwards, were ravaging the very area claimed by France.

The threat to her territorial integrity had a salutary effect on Siam, for reforms in the system of government and provincial administration became absolutely imperative. The central government had, however, to be reformed first before changes could be made in the provincial administration.

ii

Early Reforms in the Central Government.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, when external pressure on Siam's territorial integrity was increasing in severity from year to year, reforms in the

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Ruang Prap Ho, The Suppression of the Hos, (Prachum Phongsawadan, xxiv, 1922), 1-4.

2. A. Pavie, Mission Pavie, Indochine 1879-1895, Geographie et Voyages, ii (Paris 1901), 215.

central government and the provincial administration became absolutely imperative. Little, however, could be done, for the government was poor, inefficient, and incapable of reforming itself. The government's incapacity to reform itself was caused by the fact that it was controlled by a faction of princes and noblemen, who, using their power to misappropriate the small revenue, had vested interests in the old system of administration. Reforms began to take place only after the monopoly of power by this particular group had been brought to an end, and when the King had become the undisputed head of the government. This political change entailed reforms, because the monarchy, which had been weak in internal affairs for a large part of the nineteenth century, used reforms as weapons to attack the system of government upheld by those in power. It also paved the way towards further reforms, because the government then had to mobilize all the resources of the country in order to defend Siam against the threats to her territorial integrity.

As reforms in the central government and the provincial administration depended on a shift in political power, one of the most consequential events in the second half of the nineteenth century was the revolution which gave control of the government to King Chulalongkorn. The revolution was bloodless and it took place over the course of seventeen years. When King Chulalongkorn came to the throne in 1868,

the monarchy was a cipher in internal politics. Since the King was only fifteen years old at the time, there was a Regency, which was dominated by the Regent, Chao Phraya Sisuriyawong (Chuang Bunnag), the Second King, Prince Wichaichan, and their faction of princes and noblemen. These men were all powerful, for they, through holding the Prime Ministership for the military administration, the Kalahom, the Ministry of Finance, the Khlang, and the Department for Foreign Affairs, the Krommatha, controlled a large part of the armed forces and the revenue of the country.¹ Political, judicial, administrative, and social reforms were used as weapons to attack this system of government. In spite of the moral support of Great Britain, these frontal assaults were of no avail, and the King patiently waited for death to take its toll of the ruling clique, most of whose members belonged to an older generation. Since the monarchy had built up its own political party and a private army in the meantime, it was gradually able to take over the government in the 1880s. As the undisputed head of the government, King Chulalongkorn then initiated reforms the greatest of which were formalized in 1892.

The political and judicial reforms of 1874 were designed

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Rattanakosin Ratchakan thi Ha, The Chronicle of the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Bangkok 1961), pp. 19-26.

to turn direct control of the government over to the King. They took place because, although the King became the legitimate ruler in 1873, when the Regency was dissolved on his coming of age, he still had no power, for the Regent's faction continued to dominate the government. Since he was not strong enough to dismiss the ministers, the King tried to bypass them and to govern the country directly through two councils, the State Council and the Privy Council, which were set up respectively in June and August of 1874. The twelve State Councillors and forty-nine Privy Councillors who were the King's nominees, were enjoined to make known, 'what is or may be burdensome' to the people, and 'to effect their modification.'¹ In the judicial sphere, the power of the ministerial courts was undermined by the establishment of the Supreme Court, the San Rapsang, in the same year. It was easier to make appeals to this court of ten judges than to the King, who up till then had been the highest appellate authority in the land.²

The administrative and social reforms, which were promulgated in 1873 and 1874, were designed to supplement the political and judicial reforms by undermining the economic

1. 'Proclamation Clarifying the Position of the State Council', Siam Repository, ed. S.J. Smith (Bangkok, vi, 1874) pp. 488-491. The list of the first forty-nine Privy Councillors is on p. 588.

2. 'Sahn-Rap-Sang', ibid., pp. 502-504, and p. 521.

basis of the clique in power. In 1873, the ministries were deprived of a large part of the revenue, when tax-farmers were directed to send their payment to a Revenue Office, which had been created as an institution independent of the government.¹ The grip on the remaining taxes was also tightened, when, in the following year, an Audit Office, which was directly under the King's control, was established.² While the monarchy was taking control of the fiscal administration, it was ingeniously depriving the princes and nobility of a source of livelihood and strength in another way. In 1874, an act was passed, whereby the value of slaves born in 1868 was to depreciate progressively to nothing by 1889, when the slaves, on reaching the age of twenty one, automatically

1. 'Royal Edict pertaining to the Financial Department', ibid., p. 17.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Phra Prawat Krom Phraya Thewawong Waropakan, A Biography of Prince Thewawong (Bangkok, 1923), p. 13.

became free.¹ While the sincerity of its humanitarian motives is not questioned, it is nevertheless impossible not to notice the political implications of this reform.. As slaves were saleable commodities, the princes and the nobility were progressively going to be deprived of their capital and income. This in turn affected their power, because hitherto they had been able to use their wealth to purchase both political and military support. On the other hand, the monarchy, although it too was a slave-owner, benefited eventually from the reform, for, while slaves had either to work for the government for eight days of the year or pay a commutation tax of one baht fifty stangs, free men would either have to work three months of the year, or pay the government eighteen baht.

1. Phraya Anuman Ratchathon, Ruang Loek That nai Ratchakan thi Ha, The Abolition of Slavery in the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Bangkok 1956), pp. 27-30, and 64-66.

The children of debt-slaves were slaves from birth, and their value was fixed according to their age-groups. Boys and girls between 1 and 3 months old were worth 6 and 4 baht respectively. Men between 26 and 40 and women between 21 and 30 years old were worth 56 and 40 baht respectively. Men and women between 91 and 100 were worth 3 and 4 baht respectively.

In the revised scale of values, which applied only to those slaves born in 1868, boys and girls between 7 and 8 years old were worth 32 and 28 baht respectively. Between 18 and 20, they were worth 3 baht only. At the age of 21, they ceased to have any value and could not again be enslaved.

This law was enforced only in the inner and outer provinces. Measures were not taken towards the gradual abolition of slavery in the north and the Siamese Cambodian provinces until 1900 and 1903 respectively.

All children of debt-slaves in the provinces and in the north were freed in 1905 and 1911 respectively. The extinction of slavery was not, however, achieved until after the First World War.

The monarchy won a moral victory over the ruling clique after there was nearly an open clash over these reforms. Both sides, knowing full well that the reforms constituted a challenge, were mutually afraid of the other's armed forces. In 1875, the situation was so tense at one stage that the Second King, Prince Wichaichan, fearing that he and his men were about to be attacked by the King's forces, took refuge in the British Consulate. British involvement, however, weighed the scale fully in the King's favour. The British, not wanting any unrest, which might give the French an opportunity to interfere in Siamese affairs, gave their support to the legitimate ruler of the country. The governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Andrew Clarke, came personally to arbitrate between the opposing factions. He made both the former Regent, Chao Phraya Sisuriyawong, (Chuang Bunnag), and Prince Wichaichan promise to observe the monarchy's 'authority over the armed forces of the Kingdom', and 'exclusive right of controlling and regulating its finances'.¹

In spite of this moral victory, the shift in political power was delayed for ten years. King Chulalongkorn, not wishing to cause another confrontation, which might lead to a more active British intervention in Siamese affairs,

1. R.H. Vetch, The Life of General Sir Andrew Clarke (London 1905), pp. 133-139.

desisted from rigidly applying the laws enacted in 1873 and 1874. The State Council, the Privy Council, and the Supreme Court were inactive while the old ministers remained in office. The Revenue Office and the Audit Office continued to receive only a part of the revenue, while all the ministries collected taxes, a large part of which was then shared between the officials. It was not until the 1880s, when death had taken its toll of the most important members of the ruling clique, Chao Phraya Sisuriyawong (Chuang Bunnag) and Prince Wichaichan who died respectively in 1882 and 1885, that the shift in political power finally took place.

The monarchy had, however, made the shift in power inevitable by building up a strong political following and a powerful private army. The core of the 'Court Party' was made up of the King's numerous brothers and half brothers.¹ They were joined by all those princes, noblemen, and petty noblemen, who had been kept out of the more lucrative posts in the government by the Bunnags and their faction. There were also members of the Bunnag family itself, for there was a split in that family between the senior and the junior branches, between the supporters of the Regent and those who resented his dictatorial power, and between the elder members

1. Ratchasakunlawong, The Genealogy of the Chakri Family (1st edn., 1920), pp. 56-122. King Mongkut, Rama IV, had eighty-two children by his Queens and consorts, thirty-nine of whom were boys.

of the family in office and the younger ones who were anxious to get on in the world.¹ The 'Court Party' attracted all the young, bright, and energetic people, to whom King Chulalongkorn symbolised all that was enlightened and progressive, while the former Regent and Prince Wichaichan seemed to embody all that was backward and reactionary.² The shift of power was made doubly certain by the King's possession of a powerful private army. From the modest beginning of twenty soldiers in the Corp of Military Pages, the Thahan Mahatlek,

1. Prince Sommot Ammoraphan, Ruang Tang Chao Phraya nai Krung Rattanakosin, The Appointment of Chao Phrayas in the Chakri Period (1st edn., Bangkok 1918). The split between the senior and the junior branches of this family was mentioned in Chao Phraya Phatsakorawong's notes on p. 172. Chao Phraya Phatsakorawong, (Phon Bunnag), the Regent's youngest brother, was one of the most prominent members of the 'Court Party' from 1873 onwards. The disagreement between the Regent and another brother, Chao Phraya Phanuwong (Thuam Bunnag) of the Department of Foreign Affairs over whether or not the King should pay a visit to India in 1872 was mentioned in Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Khwaam Song Cham, Memoirs (Bangkok 1963), p. 176.

2. The Regent and Prince Wichaichan's father, the Second King Pinklao, had nevertheless been the foremost champions of the opening of Siam to western commerce and the adaptation of western technology. This is well illustrated in Sir John Bowring, op. cit., ii, p. 228.

in 1870, the King, on his slender revenue, built up a professional army of 15,000 troops and 3000 marines, commanded by himself and officered by his adherents, by the 1880s.¹

The shift in political power automatically brought about changes in the central government. The King had succeeded in what he had set out to do in 1873 and 1874. Without recourse to the State Council and the Privy Council, the Revenue Office and the Audit Office, the King had become the undisputed head of the government and thus the master of the fiscal administration. By making use of his control over appointments, the ministries were given only to members of the 'Court Party'. The revenue, once so easily misappropriated, was now passed over to the Ministry of Finance, which was put under the King's own brother, Prince Chakkraphatdi-phong, in 1885.²

The political change, however, paved the way towards further reforms, because the monarchy's direct control over the government had not affected its intrinsic inefficiency. Every department of the administration suffered from a lack of functional differentiation. Even if misappropriation of the revenue had been reduced to a large extent, the fiscal

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., pp. 160-173; and A.J. Loftus, The Kingdom of Siam: Its Progress and Prospects (Huntingdon 1891), p.5.

2. Ratchasakunlawong, op.cit., pp. 59-60.

administration was still basically unsound, because most of the ministries and departments continued to collect taxes and the payment of tax-farms continued to be made in numerous instalments. The government was not able to afford the resulting muddles and delays because it already had a limited revenue. The revenue was small, because it bore no relation to Siam's prosperity, which had been steadily rising since the 1850s, when the country was opened to western commerce and the unlimited demand for rice on the world market.¹ The government only benefited from those taxes which it collected directly, such as the import tax at the port of Bangkok, the rice tax from those provinces under its direct control, and the export tax at the port of Bangkok on those goods which had not been taxed before by either an excise tax or an inland transit duty. On the other hand, it did not fully benefit from the tax-farms, for, even if the consumption of goods had risen at the same rate as the rice export, and the government had forced the farmers to make higher bids, King Chulalongkorn still maintained that the yeild from the tax farms came to only half of what the farmers had been able to collect from the people.² Bureaucratic

1. J.C. Ingram, Economic Change in Thailand since 1850 (Stanford 1955) p. 38. The volume of rice export increased five fold between 1857 and 1889.

2. Rama V, King Chulalongkorn, Phraratchadamrat song tha-laeng Phra borommarachathibai kae khai kan pokkhong Phaendin, Announcement and Explanation of the reform of the government and the administration (1st edn., Bangkok 1927), p. 42.

inefficiency was not confined to the fiscal administration. The provinces could hardly have been supervised closely, since, apart from their territorial responsibilities, the Ministry for the North, the Mahatthai, the Ministry for the South, the Kalahom, and the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Krommatha, also had, in the case of the first two, military and diplomatic, and in the case of the latter, judicial and fiscal responsibilities.¹ King Chulalongkorn expressed the need for change in these terms,

'As the country develops faster than in former times, the present government, apart from never having having been efficient, barely serves modern needs. I have a great desire, therefore, to reform the traditional system of government, so that it will suit the times, and pave the way towards the further development of the country.'²

The reform took the form of a gradual introduction of the principles of functional differentiation into the government between 1885 and 1892. After the separation of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Krommatha, from the Ministry of Finance, and its promotion to ministerial status in 1885, and the establishment of the purely functional Department of Education in 1887, King Chulalongkorn stated to experiment with a functionally differentiated cabinet-government in 1888. The King's major

1. ibid., pp. 16-33, 38-41, 44-46.

2. ibid., pp. 1-2.

aim was, 'to divide the work so that each ministry is responsible for that which it is capable of doing.'¹ The traditional arrangement, whereby there were two Prime Ministers, 'Four Supporting Ministers', and six Councillors, was discarded. It was replaced by a cabinet of twelve ministers of equal rank whose functions were strictly differentiated. The Prime Ministerships for the civil and the military administration which were also the Ministries for the North and the South, the Mahatthai and the Kalahom, were relieved of all but their territorial responsibilities. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Krommatha, was relieved of its territories and left with only its diplomatic responsibilities. While three of the 'Four Supporting Ministries' were shorn of their extraneous activities, the fourth, the Ministry of Finance, was enlarged and given the entire financial administration of the government. Three new ministries were brought into being, the Ministries of Defence, Justice, and Public Works. The Department of Education, which was one year old, and the age-old Department of the Royal Scribes, were both promoted to ministerial status, the latter of which was given a new title, the Ministry of the Royal Secretariat.²

The reform of the central government was not enacted

1. Rama V, King Chulalongkorn, op.cit., p. 57.

2. ibid., pp. 58-59.

into law immediately, because time was needed for all the adjustments which had to be made. The loyalty of the men whom King Chulalongkorn had designated as the new ministers did not make up for either their youth or their lack of experience. When the experimental cabinet began to have meetings in 1888, if the Ministers of the North and the South, who were mere figure-heads, were not counted, the average age of the ministers, who included two of the King's brothers, seven of his half-brothers, and a commoner, was just over thirty two.¹ The youngest of the ministers, Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Prince Narissaranuwattiwong, who were both only twenty-six years old, were entrusted with the Ministries of Education and Public Works, the former of which was only one year old, and the latter of which was a completely new foundation. The others were more fortunate in being given ministries which had some traditional foundations. They had, however, to solve the problem of the transfer of departments between each others' ministries so that functional differentiation could be strictly observed. The difficulties did not terminate with the creation of ministries and

1. The members of the experimental cabinet of 1888 can be found in, Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Phra Prawat Krom Phraya Thewawong Waropakan, A Biography of Prince Thewawong (Bangkok 1923), p. 29. Their ages can be worked out from the dates given in Ratchasakunlawong, op.cit., pp. 56-122, and Prince Sommot Ammoraphan, op.cit., pp. 176-177.

the transfer of departments, for the success of the new system ultimately depended on the officials' reaction to the new administration. A completely new civil service mentality had to be acquired. Men, who had lived off a share of the judicial fees and the country's taxes, had to adjust themselves to the idea that they were becoming servants of the State, who were expected to work fixed hours and to receive regular salaries.¹ In spite of all these difficulties, the shift in political power had, however, swept the opposition aside, and when King Chulalongkorn's policy was enacted into law in 1892, the government was enabled to start to mobilize all available resources in order to defend the Kingdom's territorial integrity and to reform the provincial administration.

iii

Early Reforms in the Provincial Administration.

The roots of the reform of the provincial administration can be traced back to the 1870s, when Siam had to defend her territorial integrity against increasing pressure from France

1. Prince Thewawong and his staff at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were the first officials to work fixed hours from 1885 onwards. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., p. 20. Regular salaries were given to State Councillors, Privy Councillors, officers, and men in the army. 'Proclamation Clarifying the Position of the State Council' Siam Repository, op.cit., pp. 488-491. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Khwan Song Cham, Memoirs (Bangkok 1963), pp. 6-7. Kachon Sukhaphanit, Thanandon Phrai, The Condition of the Common People (Bangkok 1962), pp. 44-47.

and Great Britain. The government's defence of the Kingdom entailed administrative, judicial, and financial changes in the tributary states and the outer and inner provinces, which constituted in varying degrees of importance the first steps taken towards a centralised administration.

The government reacted against external pressure by strengthening its defence of the threatened areas of the Kingdom. This defence was based on the posting of commissioners, khaluang, who were given substantial military support, to most of the tributary states and to some of the outer and inner provinces on the frontiers.¹ These men were different from ordinary commissioners, for, instead of going back to the capital after the completion of specific tasks, they stayed at their posts for a number of years. The precedents for the establishment of this kind of commissionership can be found in the first half of the nineteenth century. At the very beginning of the nineteenth century, for instance, when the loyalty of Nakhon Sithammarat was doubtful and the other south-western provinces were under constant Burmese attacks, the government sent a commissioner to Thalang on the Island of Phuket, whom it made responsible for the defence and the

1. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi, (Run Siphon), op.cit., p. 32. The first commissioner who was permanently stationed in Chiangmai, Phra Narinratchaseni, was accompanied by ten officers and sixty soldiers.

safe delivery of the revenue from the provinces in that region.¹ In 1827, after Chao Anu of Vientiane's Rebellion had exposed the weakness of the traditional provincial administration as a means of defence against external attack, the government sent Chao Phraya Kamhaeng Songkhram (Kaeo Singhaseni) to be commissioner of Nakhon Ratchasima.² These commissionerships were dissolved when the immediate danger disappeared, but the commissionerships of the 1870s became permanent centres for the central government's administration of the country. When the commissioners' tours of duty came to an end, replacements were sent immediately. This was dictated by the nature of the external pressure in the second half of the nineteenth century, which, besides the moments of crisis, was a chronic problem.

The timing of the creation and the siting of commissionerships were determined by specific pressures on the country. In 1874, the government created the commissionership of Chiangmai, which was the forerunner of the others, in order to forestall British intervention in the tributary states of the north. The possibility of such an event taking place had arisen as a result of the maladministration of forest

1. 'Chronicle of Talang, Takua Pa, Takua Tung, Pangnga, and Puket.' Journal of the Siam Society, ii Part ii (1905), 229-237. (Hereafter referred to as JSS.)

2. Natthawut Sutthisongkhram, Sam Chao Phraya, Three Chao Phraya (Bangkok 1963), p. 165.

concessions contracted between the local princes and Burmese citizens who came from British Lower Burma.¹ In 1875, the government established the commissionership of Phuket, in order to prevent British intervention in the Malay tributary states, the internal affairs of which were often unstable, and the southern inner provinces, in which the over-rapid development of the tin-mining industry had strained relations between management, which was in the hands of the governors, and labour, which was made up of Chinese immigrants.² In the same year, in order to support Luang Prabang's efforts to reassert control over its tributaries in the Hua Phan Thang Ha Thang Hok, which had been overrun by the Chinese bandits known as the Hos, it stationed a commissioner in that north-eastern Kingdom.³ In 1876, it sent a commissioner to the eastern outer province of Battambang, who was ordered to apprehend Prince Si Wattha, the Pretender to the Cambodian throne, and his followers, for their activities strained the Kingdom's relationship with France, the Protector of Cambodia.⁴ In the 1880s, the steady rise of French power in Annam led to the

1. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Run Siphon), op.cit., pp. 29-32.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Prawat Bukkhon Samkhan Chabap Sombun, Biographies of Important Men (Bangkok 1962), p. 166.

3. Toem Singhatsathit, Fang Khwa Maenam Khong, The Right Bank of the Mekong River (Bangkok 1956), i, 182.

4. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, Phongsawadan Huamuang Monthon Isan, The Chronicle of the provinces in monthon Isan (Prachum Phongsawadan, iv, 1963), 89.

establishment of four more commissionerships in the north-east at Nongkhai, Bassac, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Ubonratchathani.¹

The size of a commissionership's area of jurisdiction depended on the needs of the situation. The commissioner of Phuket, for instance, being responsible not only for the province in which he was resident but for all the western seaboard provinces, had the rank of Permanent Commissioner of the Provinces, or Khaluang Pracham Huamuang.² In 1877, the commissioner of Chiangmai was raised to the same rank, when he was made responsible for the other northern principalities of Lampang, Lamphun, Phrae, and Nan.³ In 1887, the commissioner of Luang Prabang was similarly promoted, when, apart from the Hos, the government faced new and even more formidable enemies, Muang Lai (Lai Chau) in the Sipsong Chu Thai, and France, who had annexed Annam as a Protectorate in 1884.⁴ When France, on behalf of Annam, laid claims to all lands east of the Mekong River, the areas of jurisdiction of the other commissionerships

1. ibid., p. 102 and p. 109. The commissionerships of Bassac and Ubonratchathani were established in 1882. I have been unable to find out exactly when the commissionerships for Nongkhai and Nakhon Ratchasima were established and have assumed that they belonged to the same period.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., p. 166.

3. D. McGilvary, A Half Century among the Siamese and the Lao (New York 1912), p. 112.

4. N. Iaosiwong, 'Kan Prap Ho lae Kan Sia Dindaen ph.s.2431' 'The Suppression of the Hos and the Loss of Territories in 1888', (Chulalongkorn Univ. M.A. thesis 1966), pp. 171-172.

with trans-Mekong responsibilities were all enlarged in 1890.¹ In 1891, as French pressure increased in intensity, King Chulalongkorn's half-brothers, the Princes, Prachak Sinlapakhom, Phichit Prichakon, and Sanphasitthiprasong took over the commissionerships of Nongkhai, Bassac, and Nakhon Ratchasima. Since they were given greater powers than the Permanent Commissioners of the Provinces, they were known as High Commissioners, or Khaluang Yai.²

The power of the commissioners was not strictly defined. In 1876, the government gave the first commissioner of Battambang 'absolute power', amnat detkhat, but it is not clear to what purpose it was supposed to be applied.³ The major responsibility of some of the commissioners was plainly the military defence of the Kingdom. The commissioners of Luang Prabang were concerned with co-ordinating the efforts of the local, provincial, and central government armies which assembled in that Kingdom for the campaigns against the Hos. The government found, however, that military means alone were not enough to defend the Kingdom's territorial integrity. On the one hand, it had to improve the administration of the tributary states and the outer and inner provinces in order to forestall

1. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 127.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena (Siri Thephatsadin na Ayutthaya), Thesaphiban, The Thesaphiban System of Provincial Administration (2 edn., Bangkok 1960), p.66.

3. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 89.

foreign intervention. On the other hand, it had to make administrative changes, in order to make sure of the loyalty of the provincial royalty and nobility and to obtain more resources in revenue and man-power, which were in the hands of these people, for the defence of the country. In the 1870s and 1880s, since its own relative deficiency in revenue and manpower temporarily ruled out the possibility of centralizing the provincial administration, the government encouraged the commissioners to make changes at their own discretion. The commissioners in the outer and inner provinces, using their military power and royal authority to overawe the local nobility, made more changes than those in the tributary states. This was due to the fact that the commissioners in the tributary states, owing to the nearness of foreign powers, were anxious not to alienate the local rulers and always obtained their co-operation before making changes. By force of circumstances, they followed 'the English plan of governing through the native rulers'.¹ In spite of the limitations, the commissioners made administrative changes which constituted the beginnings of a centralized provincial administration.

The commissioners of Chiangmai introduced a new system of government into that Principality which was the first step taken towards a closer political and administrative relationship between the government and the tributary states. In 1884,

1. D. McGilvary, op.cit., p. 194.

ten years after the establishment of a commissionership in the Principality, one of King Chulalongkorn's half-brothers, Prince Phichit Prichakon, devised a new system of government for Chiangmai, which was called 'the royal government and the six ministers' or the khao sanam luang lae sena hok tam-naeng. At first glance, it seemed that the central government was increasing the power of the ruler and maintaining the autonomy of the Principality, but, at closer inspection, it became clear that it was undermining the lesser princes' power, and was making more direct the relationship between itself and the Prince of Chiangmai. The commissioner obtained the co-operation of the Prince by helping him to create his own organisation for the taxation of liquor-brewing and pig-slaughter. The Prince was then willing to accept a new system of government, whereby he, advised by the commissioner and the latter's second-in-command, started to govern the Principality through six ministers, whose functions were strictly differentiated. Since the Prince theoretically controlled the appointments, he was supposed to fill the most important post, the Ministry of Finance, with his own nominee. The holders of the other five ministries, the Metropolis, Palace, Agriculture, Justice, and Defence, having been deprived of the financial basis of their power, were then presumed to be subservient to the Prince, the commissioner, and

ultimately to the central government in Bangkok.¹

Although the princes of Chiangmai realized that their position was being undermined, they, not daring to oppose openly the new system of government, confined themselves to somewhat ineffective gestures against it. They employed mediums to say that the imposition of the liquor-brewing and pig-slaughter taxes at the instigation of 'the southerners' (the Siamese from the central plain) had caused the death of one of the senior princes. Prince Phichit Prichakon, who was in Chiangmai to supervise the introduction of the constitution, silenced the rumour with another of the same kind. He said that another medium had prophesied that the spirit of 'the southerners' would demand a human sacrifice should it be further maligned.² The princes soon accepted the new system of

1. M.1/71: Phichit Prichakon to Chulalongkorn, 26 June 1884. Prince Phichit Prichakon's system of 'the royal government and the six ministers' owed a great deal to the British Residential administration developed in the Malay State of Perak by Sir Andrew Clarke, J.W.W. Birch, and Sir Hugh Low from 1874 onwards. The system followed the British example of sending to a princely court an Adviser who proceeded to 'advise' the Prince on the collection and the control of the revenue and the division of the administration into functionally differentiated departments. J.M. Gullick, op.cit., pp. 38-42.

Prince Phichit Prichakon, although he himself had never visited Perak, had probably learnt about the British Residential administration from the Siamese consul in Singapore, from the English-language newspapers sent from Singapore, and from his English acquaintances in Bangkok.

2. M.1/71: Phichit Prichakon to Chulalongkorn, 18 July 1884.

government and furthermore quickly learned to manipulate it to their own advantage. Having been shown the way by the representatives of the central government, the government of Chiangmai levied so many new taxes that there was a rising against the collection of one of them, the areca-palm tax, in 1889.¹ The rising was a failure, and its leader, a minor nobleman called Phya Phap, fled to the British Shan States.² The government must have regarded this event as a purely internal affair, which did not detract any merit from the new system of government, for it planned to introduce it into Luang Prabang in 1890.³ After the loss of Luang Prabang to the French in 1893, the government gradually introduced it into the other northern Principalities of Lampang, Lamphun, Phrae and Nan. It was to maintain this relationship with its northern tributary states until 1900.

The commissioners' treatment of the local mobility in Ubonrathathani and Nongkhai pointed towards the centralization of the administration of the outer provinces. In 1887, as soon as the governor of Ubonratchathani died, the government asserted its power and reduced that of the governorship or

1. D. McGilvary, op.cit., p. 305.

2. M.88/19: Damrong Rachanuphap to Sommot Ammoraphan, 2325/12286 13 February, 1904.

3. M.19/9: Surasak Montri to Narissaranuwattiwong, Damrong Rachanuphap, and Narathip Phraphanphong no date September, 1890.

the province. The title of phu samret ratchakan, which gave the holder the power of life and death over people, was withheld from the new governor, who was made an acting governor, phu raksa ratchakan.¹ The government, had it been questioned, could have justified its action by referring to the fact that the power of life and death, belonging only to the King, had been transferred to the commissioner, the representative of royal power in the region. In 1891, Prince Phichit Prichakon, the High Commissioner of Bassac, compensated the local nobility for their loss of power and prestige by taking them into government service. He sent three noblemen of Ubonratchathani as the government's first supervisory commissioners, khaluang kamkap ratchakan, to the minor north-eastern provinces of Roi-et, Suwannaphum, and Yasothon.² Prince Prachak Sinlapakhom, the High Commissioner of Nongkhai, also took the local nobility into government service. He gave them military training, with the hope that then they would presumably be able to help defend more efficiently the eastern frontier.³ The employment of the nobility of important provinces as government officials was to become the established practice

1. Toem Singhatsathit, op.cit., i, 470.

2. ibid., i, 546-548.

3. M.58/25: Prachak Sinlapakhom to Chulalongkorn, 17 March 1892.

when the provincial administration was methodically centralized.

The commissioners of Ubonratchathani also showed the way towards a more direct administration of the common people, the phrai, of the outer provinces by the government. In 1888, the commissioner ordered the acting-governor of Ubonratchathani to summon the people for government service, which took the form of military training.¹ This order meant that the government, by reducing the power of the local nobility, could begin to assert its control over the common people. A few years later, Prince Phichit Prichakon reduced further the power of the nobility of Ubonratchathani. On finding that the people, for the purposes of service and the payment of commutation tax, were divided into four groups under the administration of the governor and his three most senior officials, he subdivided them into eight groups.² He thereby not only loosened the concentration of power, but, by creating a government party out of the beneficiaries of the reform, he made yet easier a more direct administration of the common people by the government.

Prince Sanphasitthiprasong, the High Commissioner of

1. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 120.

2. Toem Singhatsathit, op.cit., i, 546-547.

Nakhon Ratchasima, went a step further, and showed how the government could administer the whole country with the co-operation of the people. The Prince tried to apply the British administration of Burma at the village level, which he had seen at first hand, to the villages around his city of residence. He ordered villagers to elect village elders, kamnan, who, except for the fact that they were not paid by the government, resembled the Burmese village headmen, or thugyis.¹ The village elders were made responsible for the registration of births and deaths, marriages and divorces, immigration and emigration, the inspection of fire arms, the reports of crimes, the apprehension of criminals, and the settlement of minor disputes. Although this experiment was conducted only on a limited scale around Nakhon Ratchasima, and although it was largely a failure owing to the nearly complete lack of education of the village elders, it was nevertheless a prototype of the village administration of the following period.²

In another sphere of administration, the commissioners of Chiangmai intervened in the judicial autonomy of the Principality and thereby took the first step towards the

1. F.S.V. Donnison, Public Administration in Burma (London 1952), pp. 31-33.

2. M.73/13: Phra Phrommaphiban to Chulalongkorn, 4 September, 1896.

centralization of the judicial administration of the tributary states. In 1874, the government was forced to establish a commissionership with special judicial responsibilities in Chiangmai in order to forestall British intervention in the north. The local princes themselves had made this necessary when, in 1871, there were disputes concerning timber rights between them and Burmese forest-concessionaires who came from British Burma. The Burmese, claiming the rights of extraterritoriality, took the cases down to the British Consular Court in Bangkok. During the course of the proceedings, the corruption in the administration of forest concessions was revealed and the princes lost eleven out of twenty one cases.¹ After this event, Great Britain, by the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1874, made the Siamese government responsible for the adjudication of disputes between her Asian subjects without British papers and local citizens in Chiangmai, Lampang and Lamphun.² The government, with the threat of British intervention hanging in the air, made the Chiangmai princes accept a commissioner, who was sent to carry out this arrangement. It was ironically as the caretaker of British extraterritorial rights that the government breached the judicial autonomy of a tributary state. The

1. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Run Siphon) op.cit., pp.29-30.

2. P. Duke, op.cit., p. 96.

judicial powers of the commissionership of Chiangmai were confirmed and enlarged when, by the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1883, the commissioner became the head of the local International Court, under the jurisdiction of which were placed all British Asian subjects. Great Britain, however, stationed a vice-consul in Chiangmai, to whom appeals against the judgements of the International Court could be made.¹

In 1891, the Prince of Chiangmai voluntarily yielded some more of the Principality's judicial autonomy when he announced that only central government laws would be valid in the local courts.² The government's success was, however, confined to Chiangmai. It did not have the opportunity to establish commissioners' courts in either the Malay tributary states or the tributary states on the Mekong River. The French, insisting on full extraterritorial rights for their Asian subjects, established a vice-consulate in Luang Prabang in 1886, and deprived the government of the opportunity to intervene in the judicial administration of that tributary Kingdom.³

The government also made progress towards a direct judicial administration of the outer and the inner provinces. In 1891, Prince Sanphasitthiprasong, the High Commissioner of

1. P. Duke, op.cit., p. 96.

2. M.63: The Princes of Chiangmai to the Ministry of the North, 8 October 1891.

3. P. Duke, op.cit., p. 120.

of Nakhon Ratchasima was given greater judicial powers than all previous commissioners. Supported by contingents of the regular army, the Prince was responsible for the suppression of banditry in the first class province of Nakhon Ratchasima and in all the outer provinces of the north-east.¹ He set up a court in Nakhon Ratchasima, to which all criminals apprehended by the troops were sent for trial and cases of appeals from the provincial courts were sent for judgement. He worked with astonishing energy and speed. In one year, from May 1891 to March 1892, he presided over the trials of 897 criminals, of whom 365 were convicted and 512 were released for lack of conclusive evidence. He also listened to 481 appeals, 281 of which he settled.²

Passing to another sphere of administration, the commissioners of Chiangmai and Luang Prabang took steps towards centralizing the financial administration of the tributary states. The commissioners made fiscal changes in order to help to increase the government's revenue which was needed for the maintenance of commissionerships, the military defence of the Kingdom, and for all the reforms which were supposed to forestall foreign intervention in the country. In 1874, the

1. Samnao Nangsu Ratchakan...Mahatthai 1891: Mahatthai to Phirenthorathep, 21 April 1891.

2. M.1/37: Phirenthorathep and Nai Cha Rong Mahatlek to Damrong Rachanuphap, 1/111, 13 April 1892.

commissioner of Chiangmai began to take 25% of the timber tax collected by the Principalities of Chiangmai, Lampang, and Lamphun. He took this share of the tax when, in order to lessen the chances for conflict, he helped the local princes issue forest concessions to British Burmese subjects. In 1884, Prince Phichit Prichakon, on his visit to the north, playing on the Prince of Lampang's desire to outdo the Prince of Chiangmai in showing loyalty to Bangkok, persuaded him to increase the government's share of the Lampang timber tax to 31.25%.¹ Although the government found it hard to extract its share of the tax from the princes, it had nevertheless established the precedent that it had the right to a share in the revenue of tributary states. It was probably with this thought in mind that the commissioners of Chiangmai and Luang Prabang introduced the import and export taxes into these tributary states.² They, like the commissioner of Ubonratchathani who introduced the import tax into that outer province, probably took 90% of the revenue from these taxes and gave 10% to the local governments.³ The revenue collected from the new taxes in the tributary states was not forwarded

1. M.1/71: Phichit Prichakon to Chulalongkorn, 14 May 1884.

2. N. Iaesiwong, op.cit., pp. 22-23; and, Samnao Nangsu Ratchakan...Mahatthai 1891: Mahatthai to Phonlathep, 9 May 1891.

3. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 111.

to Bangkok but was spent locally by the commissioners.¹

The commissioners of Ubonratchathani and Nongkhai showed how the government could take over the financial administration of the outer provinces. In 1884, the commissioner of Ubonratchathani introduced commutation tax, which was the first new government tax to be imposed on the province since 1791, into his city of residence.² Although he only marginally raised the revenue, for the tax was confined to the city, and the revenue from it could easily be misappropriated by the local nobility who were responsible for its collection, the commissioner had nevertheless established the precedent that the government could levy a new tax in the outer provinces. In the following year, the commissioner introduced the import tax into the whole province. He kept 90% of the revenue from it, and gave 10% to the local government.³ The High Commissioners took great liberties with the fiscal administration of the outer provinces. In 1892, Prince Phichit Prichakon, the High Commissioner of Bassac, nationalized the opium farm of Ubonratchathani.⁴ In the same year, Prince Prachak Sinlapakhom nearly extinguished the fiscal independence of Nongkhai. He nationalized the liquor, tobacco,

1. M.1/71: Phichit Prichakon to Chulalongkorn, 14 May 1884.

2. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 110.

3. ibid., p. 111.

4. M.2/37: Phichit Prichakon to Ratchasena, 8 June 1892.

salt, and pig slaughter farms. He silenced opposition to the nationalization by giving the local nobility the same amount of money which they claimed they had collected from these sources.¹ As in the tributary states, the revenue from the new sources was not, however, forwarded to Bangkok and was spent locally by the commissioners.

The government also advanced towards the direct financial administration of the inner provinces. In 1875, the government sent a commissioner to Phuket, who, besides keeping watch on the Malay tributary states and the labour disputes in this tin-mining region, also supervised the collection of the revenue from the tax-farms of the southern provinces. The government had a good excuse to intervene in the local fiscal administration. It wanted to make sure of the revenue from the tax-farms of Phuket which had increased twenty-four fold between 1872 and 1875. The yield from the tax-farms of the other southern provinces had also increased in proportion to their size and prosperity. This extraordinary rise in the revenue was caused by the fact that the governors of these towns, in order to outbid a Singapore Chinese merchant called Tan Kim Ching, had to offer higher sums for the tax-farms than formerly.² By making higher bids, they retained control

1. M.58/25: Prachak Sinlapakhom to Chulalongkorn, 17 March 1892.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Prawat Bukkhon Samkhan Chapap Sombun, Biographies of Important Men (Bangkok 1962), pp.164-165; and Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Tamnan Muang Ranong, The History of Ranong (2 end., Bangkok 1931), p. 26.

over the local fiscal administration which was the vital component of their political power. The commissioners of Phuket, unlike their contemporaries elsewhere, sent the revenue to Bangkok. This made him the forerunner of the Revenue Officer of the following period.

Apart from administrative changes, the government, by introducing new means and improving old means of communication, was getting into closer physical contact with the whole of the country. The government tried its best to improve the means of communication, in order to give maximum support to the commissioners on the frontiers. At the time that the first group of commissioners were being sent to their posts, the government founded the Survey Division in 1875. Under the guidance of two British officials, A.J. Loftus and James McCarthy, the whole country was scientifically surveyed. In 1887, this effort was crowned by the publication in London of the first complete map of Siam.¹ The surveys not only furnished geographical knowledge but also enabled the government to set up telegraph lines which linked it to areas under external pressure. In 1883, the Post and Telegraph Department was born when the telegraph lines between Bangkok and Battambang in the east and between Bangkok and British Tavoy

1. Phraya Maha ammatayathibodi (Seng Wirayasiri), Ruang Kamnoet Krom Phaenthi, The Birth of the Survey Department (Bangkok 1956), p. 23.

in the west were opened.¹ In the following years, the government gradually linked itself by both telegraph and postal services to the whole of the country. It was a sign of the time when, in 1891, some merchants in Lampang were able to use the postal service to send a letter to Prince Thewawong, the Foreign Minister, in which they complained about the lawlessness in the province of Tak.² The government also continued to improve a more traditional means of communication. It organized the digging of new canals which were useful for both irrigation and communication. They unfortunately were located only in the vicinity of Bangkok as in former times.³ The government's poverty, however, meant that Siam did not have the most advanced means of transportation of the age, the railways, until the late 1890s. Worst of all where roads in the provinces were concerned, the government had to rely on the initiative of local authorities, for it was not until 1912 that there was a budget for the construction of highways.⁴

Royal visits to various parts of the country also drew the tributary states and the provinces closer to the govern-

1. A.J. Loftus, op.cit., p. 9.

2. Samnao Nangsu Ratchakan...Mahatthai 1891; Mahatthai to Sutcharit Raksa the Governor of Tak, 4 May 1891.

3. A.J. Loftus, op.cit., p. 10.

4. Krom Thang Luang Phaendin, Anuson Krom Thang Luang Phaendin, The Royal Highways Department Commemorative Volume (Bangkok 1955), p. 45.

ment. King Chulalongkorn, like his father King Mongkut, was a keen traveller. He toured the country for both pleasure and business. His visits to the southern tributary states in 1889 and 1890 helped the governors of Nakhon Sithammarat and Songkhla and the Permanent Commissioner of Phuket to emphasize the fact that these states formed a part of the Kingdom. In 1890, he proffered advice to the Sultan of Trengganu concerning the Sultanate's territorial disputes with its neighbour, Pahang, which was one of the Malay states in the British sphere of influence.¹ He noted the symbolic significance of his being addressed in Siamese by the Malay governors of the small tributary states of Saiburi, Tani, and Yiring in 1889.² The King's presence in the inner provinces, the administrative structure of which remained largely untouched by the government, also had its effects on their governors. In 1890, the King was pleased that the governor of Songkhla had made the streets of the provincial town cleaner than when he saw them in 1889.³ In the same year, he overawed the weak governor of Takuapa, and helped him to choose the provincial officials.⁴ The most important

1. Rama V, King Chulalongkorn, Phraratchahatthalekha... ruang sadet praphat laem malayu mua rattanakosin-sok 108, 109, 117, 120, ruam si khrao, King Chulalongkorn's letters from the Malaya Peninsula, in 1889, 1890, 1898, and 1901, to the Cabinet in Bangkok (Bangkok 1925), p. 140.

2. ibid., p. 44-45.

3. ibid., p. 89.

4. ibid., p. 110.

effect of the royal visits was perhaps the fact that,

'Each trip His Majesty makes inspires the people with renewed confidence, and his impartial consideration secures their loyalty and goodwill.'¹

Royal visits, furthermore, were not undertaken by only the King, for his brothers and half-brothers also visited the provinces. In 1884, while Prince Phichit Prichakon was introducing a new system of government into Chiangmai, Prince Phanurangsi visited the southern provinces, and made a thorough report on their administration.² In 1889, Prince Wachirayan Warorot, who was a high-ranking monk in the Buddhist hierarchy, visited the temples of many southern provinces, when he was on his way to install a new Head Abbot in Songkhla.³ The King directly intervened in the provincial administration in 1891, when he appointed his half-brothers as the High Commissioners of Nongkhai, Bassac, and Nakhon Ratchasima. Prince Sanphasitthiprasong, the High Commissioner of Nakhon Ratchasima, used his power to severely punish corrupt officials in the province. He had some flogged thirty, fifty, or sixty times, others imprisoned during His Majesty's pleasure, and others fined the same amount of money as they had

1. A.J. Loftus, op.cit., p. 10.

2.5 The report was published as, Phanurangsi, Prince, Chiwiwat, Travels (Ruang Thieo Thi Tang Tang, vii, 1928).

3. Samnao Nangsu Ratchakan Krom Phra Kalahom r.s.108. A ledger containing copies of correspondence between the Kalahom and the provinces under its supervision in 1889: Kalahom to the Governors of Pranburi, Prachuapkhirikhan, Kamnoet Nopphakhun, Prathiu, Chumphon, Langsuan, Chaiya, Kanchanadit, Nakhon, Sithammarat, Songkhla, and Phattalung, K.H.77, 20 May 1889.

embezzled from the people.¹

While the administrative changes were taking place in the rear, the government, between 1874 and 1887, more than held its own ground in the defence of the territorial integrity of the Kingdom. By 1886, troops had been successful in reasserting the tributary Kingdom of Luang Prabang's rights over the Hua Phan Thang Ha Thang Hok, which had been occupied by the Chinese bandits known as the Hos for most of the period between 1873 and 1885. After two attempts to dislodge them in 1875 and 1883 had failed, the Hos were not only driven out of the Hua Phan Thang Ha Thang Hok in 1885, but in 1886 they even had to defend the Sipsong Chu Thai, which had been their stronghold since 1865. The troops were, however, not only destroying the bases of the Hos, but also asserting the government's control over the petty principalities of the Sipsong Chu Thai, the rulers of which, known as 'the Princes of the two skies' had maintained their independence by paying tribute to both Bangkok and Hué. The government had already established a foothold in the area, when, in 1884, for reasons of local politics, the Hos of Muang Thaeng (Dien Bien Phu) swore their allegiance and promised to send triennial tributes to Bangkok.² In 1886,

1. M.1/34: Phirenthorathap and Nai Cha Rong Mahatlek to Damrong Rachanuphap, 1/111, 13 April 1892.

2. Phraya Ritthirong Ronnachet, Phongsawadan Muang Thaeng, The Chronicle of Dien Bien Phu (Prachum Phongsawadan, ix, 1918), pp. 76-111.

the government obtained the submission of many Ho bands and petty principalities in the area.¹

At this point, however, the tide turned and the defence of the Kingdom slowly began to crumble. The government was unable to hold the Sipsong Chu Thai, because its armies were too small and its lines of communication were over-stretched. Furthermore, it had alienated Muang Lai (Lai Chau), which was the most powerful of the petty principalities in that region. In 1886, the army had kidnapped three of the Lord of Muang Lai's sons in the hope presumably that they were hostages for the principality's good behaviour,² The ruse turned out to be a catastrophic mistake, for, in 1887, Auguste Pavie, the French consul in Luang Prabang, who had befriended the lords of Muang Lai, secured the release of the young men from their captivity in Bangkok.³ The French then took full advantage of Muang Lai's friendship towards France and enmity towards Siam. In 1888, with the excuse that they were going to suppress the Hos, who were menacing Tongking, the French marched unopposed into the Sipsong Chu Thai. Siam had little choice but to accept the fait accompli.⁴ It was from this time onwards that France, on behalf of Annam, began to lay claims on all lands east of the Mekong River.⁵

1 and 2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Ruang Prap Ho, The Suppression of the Hos, (Prachum Phongsawadan, xxiv 1922), pp. 6-49, and in particular, pp. 46-47.

3. A. Pavie, Mission Davie, Indochine 1879-1895, Geographie et Voyages, i (Paris, 1901), 219 and 233.

4 and 5. P. Duke, op.cit., pp. 122-127, and p. 128.

The government reacted against this increased external pressure by reinforcing its defence of the threatened areas of the Kingdom. When the French annexed the Sipsong Chu Thai, the commissioner of Bassac sent two of his officials as commissioners to Tapon (Sepon) and Muang Nong on the frontier with the French Annamite province of Lao Bao. In 1890, the government increased the area of jurisdiction of the commissions of Nongkhai, Bassac, and Ubonratchathani. In the same year, the commissioner of Bassac sent more officials as commissioners to the frontier towns of Saenpang, Sithandon (Khone), Chiangtaeng (Stungtreng), and Sarawan.¹ In 1891, the King sent his half-brothers, Prince Rrachak Sinlapakhom and Prince Phichit Prichakon as High Commissioners to Nongkhai and Bassac. The Princes completed the line of commissions on the frontier, which then stretched from Luang Prabang to Stungtreng.² It was in this state of emergency that King Chulalongkorn reformed the government and appointed his half-brother, Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, as the Minister of the North.

1. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 120, and pp. 127-128.

2. M.8/56 Phichit Prichakon to Chulalongkorn, 16/111, 18 November 1892.

The Advent of Prince Damrong Rachanuphap.

King Chulalongkorn reformed the government on the 1st April 1892. The Announcement of the Appointment of Ministers stated that the King,

'desiring to increase the development of the country, is going to maintain good traditions and to abolish defective ones. The people will thereby be able to live happily and to work honestly. The Kingdom will then progress towards the state of development attained elsewhere in the world.'¹

It went on to announce the new principles of government by saying that the King,

'considers that the administration can be made efficient by the division of functions between ministries, so that officials of each ministry will be qualified to do the work which is given to them...There will then be no delays, for when the King desires that something should be done, there will be someone to do it immediately.'²

The new government closely resembled the experimental government of 1888. There were twelve ministries, the Ministries of the North, the South, Foreign Affairs, Metropolis, Palace, Finance, Agriculture, Defence, Justice, Education, Public Works, and the Royal Secretariat. The neatness of the functional differentiation was marred temporarily by two anomalies. The provincial administration

1 and 2. 'Prakat Tang Tamnaeng Senabodi 1 Mesayon r.s. 111', the Announcement of the Appointment of Ministers, 1 April 1892, RKB, ix, (1892), 25-28.

of the Kingdom was still divided between the Ministry of the North (the Mahatthai) and the Ministry of the South (the Kalahom). Furthermore, the Ministry of the South remained nominally responsible for military affairs, even though the real responsibility had already been transferred to the Ministry of Defence.¹ These anomalies were later removed. All the twelve ministers, among whom were two of the King's brothers, seven of his half-brothers, and three commoners, were of equal rank. All, except two, had been members of the experimental cabinet of 1888. If the Minister of the South, who was more or less a cipher, was excluded, the average age of the members of the cabinet was just over thirty-five. The King reshuffled a few members of the old cabinet. The most important change from the point of view of the provincial administration was the fact that the King retired the Minister of the North, Chao Phraya Rattanabodin (Bunrod Kanlayanamit), who was sixty-seven years old, and replaced him with Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, who until then was the Director of the Department of Education.²

1. The King did not summarily dissolve the Ministry of the South presumably because its Minister was an old and loyal friend, Chao Phraya Rattanathibet (Phum Sichaiyan).

2. Hereafter Prince Damrong Rachanuphap will be referred to as Prince Damrong. This diminutive form of the Prince's name is regularly used in both Siamese and foreign printed and manuscript sources.

The King's choice of Prince Damrong as the new Minister of the North was a curious one. He was entrusting his half-brother, who at that time was just under thirty years old, with one of the most important ministries in the government. The Ministry of the North was responsible for all the northern territories, including those north-eastern tributary states and outer and inner provinces, which were under direct pressure from France. The King made this appointment without a prior word of warning to his brother. Prince Damrong himself said that he was taken completely by surprise, for he had expected to become the Minister of Education in the new cabinet.¹ According to the Prince, the King later explained that he chose him because,

'He had been trying for a long time to find a Minister of the North, who was capable of implementing his wishes, but had been unable to find one. He then noticed that my abilities were suitable for that post and so transferred me from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of the North.'²

It is tempting to attribute inevitability to the King's choice, for Prince Damrong was to remain in charge of the Ministry of the North, which he was to transform into the Ministry of the Interior, for the next twenty-three years.

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., p. 6.

2. ibid., p. 7.

It is more valuable, however, to discover why the King thought that Prince Damrong, rather than, for instance, Prince Prachak Sinlapakhom or Prince Phichit Prichakon or Prince Sanphasitthiprasong, all of whom had shown more than average proficiency in provincial administration, was especially qualified for the Ministry.

The King chose Prince Damrong for the Ministry of the North because the Prince was an exceptionally efficient administrator. He informed his half-brother, Prince Prachak Sinlapakhom, the High Commissioner of Nongkhai, that,

'I have appointed Prince Damrong the Minister of the North, because I believe that he will be able to do the job efficiently.'¹

The King first noticed Prince Damrong's talents, when the Prince was serving as an officer in the Corps of Military Pages. In 1880, he appointed him as one of the two Chiefs of Staff of the Corps, when the Prince was only eighteen years old and had been commissioned for only three years.² In 1887, the King promoted him, when he was still only twenty-five years old, to the position of the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Army.³ The Prince had demonstrated his administrative

1. M.58/25: Chulalongkorn to Prachak Sinlapakhom, 17 April 1892.

2. Sutcharit Thawonsuk, Phra Prawat lae Ngan khong Somdet Phraborommarong thoe Krom Phraya Damrong Rachanuphap, A Biography of Prince Damrong Rachanuphap (Bangkok 1965), i, 218-231.

3. ibid., ii, 62-63.

capability between 1880 and 1887 by organizing the re-equipment of the artillery section of the army.¹

The King, however, chose Prince Damrong not only because the Prince was a talented staff officer but also because he was an efficient administrator of civilian affairs. Between 1880 and 1887, the King made Prince Damrong personally responsible for the administration of three schools, the Princes' School, the Ecclesiastical School, and Phraya Sis-unthon Wohan's School, and made the Corps of Military Pages responsible for the foundation of two new schools, the Officers' and the Non-Commissioned-Officers' School (which later became known as the Phra Tamnak Suan Kulap School) and the Survey School.² The King was impressed by the way the Prince threw himself into educational affairs. In 1885, four years after its foundation, the Corps of Military Pages opened Phra Tamnak Suan Kulap School to ordinary students who did not intend to make the army their career. In the same year, when the King presided over the ceremony, which took place after the first public examination of lay students as opposed to monks, he said that,

1. ibid., i, 233-234.

2. Sutcharit Thawonsuk, op.cit., ii, 94.

'Ditsaworakuman" (Prince Damrong) is worthy of praise, for he has made efforts to organize efficiently and successfully all the schools. It is a testimony to the fact that you have obeyed my command and that you were willing to acquire knowledge of education. I must therefore thank you in particular.'¹

The King was probably more impressed by the accomplishments of the other new school, the Survey School, which had been founded in 1882. In 1887, the Survey Department, which had been founded as a department within the Corps of Military Pages in 1885 and which was staffed by graduates of the School, published the first complete map of Siam in London.²

The King showed his approval of Prince Damrong's administrative capability by appointing him as the first Director of the new Department of Education in 1887 and in the following year summoned him to join the experimental cabinet. In 1889, he also made him the Director of the Department of Health, on the sudden death of Prince Saowaphang, who was originally destined for the post. The King probably thought that the Prince was capable of holding this post, for he considered him as one of the 'founders' of the country's first modern Hospital, Sirirat Hospital, which had been opened in 1888. In the meantime, the King retained the Prince as the Deputy Commander-in-Chief until 1890, when he

1. ibid., ii, 102.

2. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Seng Wirayasiri), op.cit., p. 23.

finally relieved him of his military responsibilities. He held the Prince in such favour that, in 1891, he sent him to Russia to return the state visit which the Tsarevitch Nicholas (Nicholas II) had paid to Siam in 1890. He arranged for the Prince, during the course of his stay in Europe, to pay courtesy calls on the courts of Great Britain, Denmark, Turkey, Germany, and Greece, and on the President of France. He thereby enabled the Prince to study the educational institutions of these countries as well as those of Egypt, India, and Burma, which he visited briefly on his return trip to Siam.¹

Although the King had undoubtedly intended to appoint Prince Damrong as the Minister of Education, he did consult the Prince over the affairs of the Ministry of the North in 1891. In that year, the King was helping Chao Phraya Rattanabodin (Bunrod Kanlayanamit), the Minister of the North, to reform the central administration of that ministry according to the principles of functional differentiation which he himself had laid down in 1888. He felt that the officials of the Ministry, some of whom were enthusiastic supporters of his policies, were not capable of carrying through reforms, for,

1. Sutcharit Thawonsuk, op.cit., ii, 120-214.

'as it is necessary to know about European methods of administration, because the Europeans are hundreds of times more experienced than we are in this activity, so we must employ someone, who knows about these methods, to lay down the new administrative regulations.'¹

The King asked for Prince Damrong's assistance by saying that,

'I know that you read English and that your organisation of the Department of Education is exemplary, I therefore want you to help to plan the reorganisation of the Ministry of the North, to point out problems which you suspect will hinder its progress, and to solve them by the adaptation of European methods to Siamese administration.'²

The King did not know then that he was unintentionally preparing Prince Damrong for the Ministry of the North. The Prince hastily studied the central administration of that ministry, discovered why it was inefficient, and presented his plan for its reorganisation. He recommended the abolition of the system whereby four rotas of the Duty Division took turns, which lasted for five days, to receive correspondence, to direct them to the departments concerned, and to send replies to the provinces and the tributary states. He saw that this system caused delays in administration, because only a quarter of the officials of the Duty Division were at work at any particular time, and because, what was worse, each rota only dealt with the correspondence which it

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1. M.10/19: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, R1/110 6 1, 4 April 1891.
 2. ibid.

received during its period of duty. He planned to eliminate the delays by transforming the Duty Division into a Central Division all of the officials of which would always be on duty to deal with correspondence. He also recommended that, in order to enable the Ministry to cope efficiently with the volume of work it was expected to do, the number of its administrative divisions should be increased from four to ten divisions. Apart from the transformation of the Duty Division into a Central Division, he recommended the suppression of the Permanent Under-Secretary's Division, the retention of the Tributes and Financial Divisions, and the creation of the Metropolitan Affairs, Inner Provinces, Outer Provinces, Legal, Judicial, Correspondence, and the Personnel and Statistics Divisions.¹ He realized that the government could not afford to expand the Ministry on such a scale immediately but hoped that it would finance the creation of one or two divisions at a time. He did not consider at that time either the necessity for the Metropolitan Affairs Division or the amalgamation of the Inner Provinces and Outer Provinces Divisions, the Legal and Judicial Divisions, and the Personnel and Statistics Divisions. He insisted instead

1. The Metropolitan Affairs Division was supposed to handle inter-ministerial affairs. The Legal Division and the Judicial Division were supposed respectively to transfer cases to other ministries and to deal with cases which were directly under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the North.

on their absolute functional differentiation. As a corollary to the expansion of the Ministry, he recommended the recruitment of members of the nobility, who should be given professional training for executive posts. He insisted, however, that the clerks should also be given professional training and be made to feel that the channels of official and social advancement were opened to them.¹ Prince Damrong's plan turned out to be only an academic exercise, for the reorganization of the Ministry between April 1891 and April 1892 did not get beyond the naming of chiefs for eight of the ten divisions. The two most senior officials of the Ministry sabotaged further progress by refusing to co-operate in the transformation of the Duty Division into the Central Division.²

Although Prince Damrong's plan came to nothing, the King chose him for the Ministry of the North, because by 1892 the Prince had proved himself to be not only an efficient administrator but also a zealous follower of royal commands. The King, having sent his other reliable half-brothers, the

1. M.10/19: Damrong to Rattanakobodin, S 67/72, 18 April 1891.

2. M.10/19: Ratchawaranukun to Rattanakobodin, 26 April 1891. The two officials presumably resented the amalgamation of the four rotas of the Duty Division and the transformation of the latter into a Central Division all the officials of which would always have to be on duty to deal with the correspondence.

Princes Prachak Sinlapakhom, Phichit Prichakon, and Sanphasi-tthiprasong, as High Commissioners to Nongkhai, Bassac, and Nakhon Ratchasima, needed a dependable assistant to organize the central administration of the Ministry of the North. He could not rely on the previous minister, Chao Phraya Rattanabodin (Bunrod Kanlayanamit), and told Prince Damrong that,

'he had had to occupy himself with the work of the Ministry of the North more than with that of other ministries...'1

He realized, however, that he was promoting Prince Damrong over the heads of his other half-brothers, and wrote to Prince Prachak Sinlapakhom in order to justify the appointment in these terms,

'I have made Prince Damrong the Minister of the North, which post is responsible for giving orders to commissioners in northern territories...According to the Siamese way of thinking, it seems that I have made a younger brother and a junior man responsible for giving orders to an elder brother and a senior man...I beg you to understand that I want today's Minister to be a Secretary of State and not a fourth or fifth king as in former times.2 I can either dismiss or transfer him from one ministry to another according to his ability...and I therefore want you to consider him as the King's Secretary, whom the King has entrusted with certain jobs. In this way, it is of no importance that a senior man will receive his orders from a

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., p. 8.

2. The King himself used the English term, 'Secretary of State'.

junior one...I hope that Prince Damrong's diligence will gradually remove the inefficiencies and obstructions, the bywords for the Ministry of the North, which have wearied you for a long time.'¹

According to Prince Damrong, the King used a different argument to explain why he had transferred him from the Department of Education to the Ministry of the North by saying that,

'I had perhaps not considered that foreigners were already poised to invade Siam. If we are complacent and do not put our administration in order, leaving it as lax as it is, it will soon become a danger to the country. Perhaps Siam might even lose her independence. If the country loses its independence, can the Ministry of Education carry on with its good work? The preservation of the Kingdom through putting in order its provincial administration is therefore much more important. This task falls within the responsibility of the Ministry of the North more than of other ministries because the majority of the provinces are under its supervision. He had been trying for a long time to find a Minister of the North who was capable of implementing his wishes but had been unable to find one. He then noticed that my abilities were suitable for the post and so transferred me from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of the North.'²

Prince Damrong could, however, do little to protect the Kingdom's territorial integrity against French depredation. On the very day he took office, four Siamese soldiers at a

1. M.58/25: Chulalongkorn to Prachak Sinlapakhom, 17 April 1892.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op. cit., p. 7.

frontier post were arrested by French troops.¹ Although they were released soon afterwards, the incident was symptomatic of the deterioration of the relationship between Siam and France. From 1889 onwards, there was an increase in the number of frontier incidents which was bound sooner or later to lead to open warfare between the two countries. Having laid claims to all lands on the left bank of the Mekong River, the French, in 1889 and 1890, started to make good their claims by telling the Siamese to evacuate their advanced positions facing the French Annamite province of Lao Bao on the Annamite Cordillera.² In 1891, they appointed Bang Bien, one of the lords of Muang Lai (Lai Chau) whom the Siamese had held as captive in 1886 and had had to release in 1887, as the French Resident of Thung Chiangkham in the tributary Kingdom of Luang Prabang.³ The Siamese reacted against these provocations by refusing to evacuate any of their positions, by strengthening their line of defence, and by arresting Bang Bien. Furthermore, they expelled two French merchants, Champenois and Esquilat, who were selling untaxed goods and travelling in Siamese territories without passports. The French remonstrated against the arrest of Bang

1. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 138.

2. Mom Ammorawong Wichit, op.cit., p. 123 and 128.

3. P. Duke, op.cit., pp. 133-137.

Bien, asked for compensations for the confiscation of Champenois' and Esquilat's merchandise, and demanded revenge for the death in mysterious circumstances of Massie, their Agent at Stungtreng.¹ The Siamese tried to mollify the French by offering to evacuate some of their frontier posts early in 1893, but by then it was too late. Fighting broke out along the frontier in March 1893 when French forces from Annam and Cambodia advanced upon Siamese posts. They occupied Stungtreng, but were driven away from Khammuan (Kammon) in the Kingdom of Luang Prabang and Sithandon (Khone) in the tributary Principality of Bassac in May and June of the same year. The Siamese were, however, soon forced to capitulate when French gun-boats, which had anchored off the mouth of the Chao Phraya River at Paknam, forced their entry up the river to Bangkok. This decisive action on the 13th of July 1893 later came to be known as the Paknam Incident.²

In the peace settlement which followed the war, Siam was politically humiliated, financially penalized, and territorially reduced. She was utterly powerless to resist French demands, for Great Britain took a neutral stand and advised

1. ibid., pp. 133-139. The French claimed that the Siamese had murdered Massie. The Siamese maintained that the man had either committed suicide or had died by fever.

2. P. Duke, op.cit., pp. 139-154. According to the Franco-Siamese Treaty of 1856, French warships were allowed to proceed up the Chao Phraya River only if they had received permission from the Siamese government. ibid., p. 6.

her to submit to France.¹ Her original refusal to accept unconditionally the French Ultimatum of the 20th July 1893 only meant that she had to submit to the harsher terms of the Ultimatum of the 29th July of the same year after the French had subjected Bangkok to a blockade. In the Franco-Siamese Treaty of the 3rd October 1893, Siam had to agree to the termination of proceedings against Bang Bien, the French 'Resident' of Thung Chiangkham. She had also put on trial Phra Yotmuangkhwang (Phra Yot), the commander of the Khammuan (Kammon) garrison, for the murder of Groscurin, a French officer who was killed in the battle for that town. In 1894, after his acquittal by a Siamese court, Phra Yot was sentenced to twenty years' hard labour by a court, three of the five judges of which were French.² Siam also lost all her territories on the left bank of the Mekong River and had to withdraw all troops to a position twenty-five kilometres from the river, in which zone the French were permitted to trade without the imposition of import and export taxes. Siam had also to pay two million francs as an indemnity for damages sustained by France before and during the war. Finally, she had to agree to the French occupation of the eastern province of

1. ibid., pp. 157-160.

2. ibid., p. 132. The French Consul was given the right to pay visits to the jail in order to make sure that the Siamese government did carry out the sentence.

Chanthabun pending her implementation of the terms of the Treaty.¹

Prince Damrong's task was to try to preserve what remained of the Kingdom by reforming the provincial administration. He was beset with many difficulties. The French were trying to disrupt the government's judicial administration by setting up consular courts in Nan, Korat, and Battambang. They were now able to claim the rights of extraterritoriality not only for their Chinese, Tongkinese, Annamite, Cochinchinese, and Cambodian subjects, but also for their Laotian subjects. The judicial administration could be disrupted, because many Siamese in the central plain, in order to escape either taxation or the administration of justice, could easily claim that they had come from either the Kingdom of Luang Prabang or the Principality of Bassac or from any other provinces on the left bank of the Mekong River. The French were also trying to disrupt the government's provincial administration by claiming territories on the right bank of the Mekong River on behalf of the Kingdom of Luang Prabang and the Principality of Bassac. In the first case, they argued that the territories of the Kingdom on the right bank of the river should be joined to those of the capital city which stood on the left

1. P. Duke, op.cit., pp. 156-179.

bank; and in the second case, they argued that the capital city should be joined to the rest of the Principality on the left bank of the river. They also insisted that the Siamese should carry out to the letter the withdrawal of all troops to a position twenty-five kilometres from the River. This caused disruption in the provincial administration, because in effect the Siamese had to withdraw from the natural administrative centres of the area, the chief of which were Nongkhai and Bassac on the Mekong River, to less natural centres in the hinterland such as Udonthani and Ubonratchathani. Prince Damrong's only consolation in the first few years of his tenure of office was the fact that, although Siam's territorial integrity remained insecure, the Kingdom's independence was guaranteed by the Anglo-French Treaty of the 15th January 1896.¹

1. P. Duke, op.cit., pp. 183-218.

Chapter III

The Ministry of the Interior
and the provincial administration.

The Formative Years: 1892-1899.

On the 18th January 1896, three days after the signing of the Anglo-French Treaty which guaranteed Siam's independence, King Chulalongkorn stated the case for the reform of the government and administration in cogent terms.

'In former times, our territories adjoined those of countries which possessed similar strength and systems of administration. Now from the west to the north-west, those countries have fallen to the British, and from the east to the north-east, they have fallen to the French. Our country finds itself in the midst of nations which possess more rigorous systems of administration and greater power than our former neighbours. We can no longer regard our neighbours with indifference, for we come into constant contact with them on the frontiers. There are three ways by which we can protect ourselves against internal and external dangers. Firstly, we can maintain peaceful relationships; secondly, we can possess sufficient power to defend the peace within our country; and thirdly, we can make our administration as good as theirs. If we are to protect ourselves by maintaining peaceful relationships, the fact that we do not possess the power to defend the peace within the country will prevent peaceful negotiations from always being successful. If we do not put our administration in order, we will not have enough money, which is the source of the power needed to defend the country. The expansion of power depends on the administration's taxation of the income which results from the facilitation of the people's methods of earning their livelihood and making a living out of the produce of the soil.

The strengthening and the rationalization of the administration and the development of the economy are therefore the ultimate aims of this Kingdom.¹

The Ministry of the North (the Mahatthai), which was to be transformed into the Ministry of the Interior, was intimately involved with every stage of the reforms outlined by the King. Between 1892 and 1899, Prince Damrong had, however, first to reorganize the ministry's central administration and to search for a new system of provincial administration before the government could enact bills for the systematic reform of every aspect of the provincial administration.

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The Reform of the Central Administration.

Prince Damrong was the Minister of the North for over two years before he became the first Minister of the Interior on the 23rd December 1894.² Between 1892 and 1894, the provincial administration of the Kingdom remained divided between the Ministry of the North (the Mahatthai) and the Ministry of the South (the Kalahom). The Ministry of the South,

1. Chulalongkorn to Damrong 143/454 18 January 1896. Quoted in Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi, (Seng Wirayasiri), 'Ruang Mahatthai' 'On the Mahatthai', in Krasuang Mahatthai, Anuson nuang nai ngan chalong wan thi raluk sathapana Krasuang Mahatthai khrop rop hoksip pi boribun, A Commemorative volume on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the foundation of the Ministry of the Interior (Bangkok 1952), pp. 194-195.

2. 'Prakat chat pan nathi rawang Krasuang Kalahom lae Krasuang Mahatthai', 'An Announcement concerning the division of functions between the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior', RKB, xi (1894), 306-307.

furthermore, remained nominally responsible for military affairs, even though the real responsibility had been transferred to the Ministry of Defence. In 1894, the Ministry of the South was finally dissolved.¹ Its territorial and military functions were transferred respectively to the Ministry of the North and the Ministry of Defence. The Ministry of the North then became a ministry which was solely responsible for the provincial administration of the Kingdom and could properly be called the Ministry of the Interior.² The government preserved historical tradition by retaining the names of the Mahatthai for the Ministry of the Interior, and the Kalahom for the Ministry of Defence. The dissolution of the Ministry of the South and the transfer of its departments to other ministries did not pass without some adverse comments. According to Prince Damrong, critics thought that the reorganization was unnecessary, that he would be unable to cope with the administration of the whole country, and that the new Ministry of the Interior would become too powerful.³ The government was, however, sufficiently confident and powerful

1. The King dissolved the Ministry of the South upon the retirement of Chao Phraya Rattanathibet (Phum Sichaiyan).

2. The Ministry of the Metropolis remained in charge of 'Greater Bangkok', which included Bangkok and Thonburi, and the provinces of Nonthaburi, Prathumthani, Samutprakan, and Thanyaburi until 1922.

3. Krasuang Mahatthai, Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s. 116, Report on the meeting of superintendent commissioners in 1897. (Bangkok 1897), p. 4.

to ignore these criticisms.

Prince Damrong's primary task, as the first Minister of the Interior, was to reform the ministry's central administration so that it would be able to cope with its increased activities. The ministry was pruned of departments the work of which was not relevant to provincial administration. The military departments of the former Ministry of the North, the Elephants, Cavalry, Artillery, and Palace Guards Departments were transferred to the Ministry of Defence. The fiscal departments, which had collected the tax-farms of floating-market boats, ordinary boats, theatres, bamboo canes, and teak logs, were transferred to the Ministry of Finance. The courts, which had dealt with cases arising out of the Ministry of the North's sphere of administration, were transferred to the Ministry of Justice.¹ The central administration was then divided into departments along functionally differentiated lines. The scheme to divide the central administration into ten divisions, which Prince Damrong had projected in 1891, was temporarily dropped in favour of a more practical division of the ministry into three departments. The Central Department (Krom Klang), the director of which was the Permanent Under-Secretary (Palat Thun Chalong), superintended the work

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchesena (Siri Thephatsadin na Ayutthaya), Thesaphiban, The Thesaphiban System of provincial administration (2nd edn., Bangkok 1960), p. 20.

of the entire ministry. The Legal Department (Krom Mahatthai Fai Nua) dealt with affairs in which the Ministry of the Interior and foreign nations were involved.¹ This department, in other words, dealt with frontier incidents and infringements of extraterritorial privileges. It presented cases to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which then raised them with the nations involved through the normal diplomatic channels. The Provincial Administration Department (Krom Phalamphang) was responsible for every level of the provincial administration.

The departmental division of the central administration was accompanied by changes in the personnel of the ministry. The King's retirement of Chao Phraya Rattanabodin (Bunrod Kanlayanamit), the Minister of the North, in 1892, was followed by Prince Damrong's retirement of many senior executive officials in the ministry. Some of these officials were indeed ripe for retirement. One official, whom the Prince retired in 1894, was eighty-three years old.² He retained other officials who showed enthusiasm for the new administration. Apart from the retirement of potentially unco-operative officials, Prince Damrong also altered the ministry's internal

1. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Seng Wirayasiri), op.cit., p. 102.

2. An announcement in RKB, xi (1894), 285.

balance of power in his favour by bringing new men to outnumber the old officials.¹ These new men were his firm supporters, for they were brought in from the former Department of Education, Suan Kulap School, and the Survey Department, with all of which he had been intimately involved. The most important of the new men, insofar as the history of the Ministry of the Interior is concerned, was Luang Thesachitwichan (Seng Wirayasiri), who later became Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi. The King gave permission for the transfer of this topographer from the Survey Department to the Ministry of the Interior so that he could furnish Prince Damrong with first-hand knowledge of the geography of the country.² Luang Thesachitwichan (Seng Wirayasiri) was to become one of the ablest officials in the ministry during and after the Prince's tenure of office.

The new and old personnel of the ministry were instilled slowly with a fresh approach to the civil service. Prince Damrong made it a rule that he himself and his officials, unlike their predecessors, would work regular hours in the

1. There were only thirteen executive officials in the old Ministry of the North, many of whom were retired by Prince Damrong from 1892 onwards. The internal balance of power was altered, when seventeen new officials joined the ministry in October of 1892. An announcement in RKB, ix (1892), 254.

2. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Seng Wirayasiri), Ruang Kamnoet Krom Phaenthi, The Birth of the Survey Department (Bangkok 1956), p. 27.

ministry.¹ He also insisted on adhering to meritocratic criteria for the promotion of officials in the ministry. In 1893, he made the promotion of clerks dependent on examinations for the first time.² In the same year, thinking that the King ought to know the officials of his own government, he made the promotion of junior executive officials dependent on not only the traditional ministerial approval but also on his recommendation of their ability to the King and on the latter's authorization of their promotion.³ He expected presumably that the King together with the Ministry of the Royal Secretariat would function as an independent civil service commission on the Ministry of the Interior's civil servants. He even introduced financial incentives into the ministry's administration in order to increase its efficiency. In 1896, he started twice-yearly typing competitions for clerks in the ministry, the winners and the runners-up of which were given monetary rewards.⁴ Above all, he was steadfast to the idea, which he had voiced in 1891, that the clerks should be

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., p. 21.

2. M.10/19: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 41/2281, 19 July 1892.

3. M.20/21: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 104/3777, 16 September 1892.

4. M.14/19: Ratchawaranukun to Chulalongkorn, 137/7355, 13 November 1896.

made to feel that the channels of official and social advancement were opened to them. In 1896, he insisted that clerks should no longer be regarded as common people (phrai), who owed noblemen in the ministry three months of annual service and were hired on an irregular basis for the rest of the year. He raised their status and bestowed on them a new sense of security and hope when he severed the ties of personal obligation between them and the executive officials, made them regular civil servants, gave them full pay and normal prospects of promotion to higher ranks of the administration.¹

At the same time, the future expansion of activities was anticipated by the training of a new type of officials for the ministry. Prince Damrong followed the Ministry of the North's tradition of training members of the provincial nobility for the provincial administration. He, however, wished to abandon informal training in favour of formal teaching. He wanted the ministry to instruct these young men for one year in elementary judicial, financial, and clerical administration, and to pay expenses for another year, while they worked under senior officials in the provinces. The Ministry of the Interior was then supposed to begin to have a new generation of officials who would be experienced in both its central and

1. M.117/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 257/42585, 1 March, 1896.

provincial administration. The Ministry started to use this course for the teaching of trainees in 1893.¹

From 1896 onwards, the central administration of the Ministry of the Interior began, however, to deal once more with not only the provincial administration but also with other branches of the government. From 1896 to 1899, four subsidiary departments, namely the Forestry Department (Krom Pamai), the Mines Department (Krom Lohakit), the Provincial Gendarmerie Department (Krom Tamruat Phuthon), and the Provincial Revenue Department (Krom Sanphakon Nok), were placed under the Ministry. The reason why these departments were put under the Ministry of the Interior was presumably because it was hoped that, their work taking place largely in the provinces, their officials would be able to co-operate with the officials from the Ministry who were in the process of trying to set up a centralized provincial administration.

The Forestry Department was created as a department within the Ministry of the Interior in 1896. The foundation of the Department was the culmination of the government's attempts to remove as much as possible any opportunity for conflict between the local princes and foreign (mostly British) forest concessionaires which had been taking place

1. M.12/19: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 149/21998, 5 January, 1893.

from 1874 onwards in the northern tributary states. The Ministry established the Department in Chiangmai in order to place it in the middle of the trouble area and appointed an Englishman, Slade, as its first Director in order to enable it to have the best possible public relations with the concessionaires. The Department then took over from the Permanent Commissioner's headquarters the task of helping the local princes to issue forest concessions. It also took on the job of inspecting the forests in order to prevent the concessionaires from trying to work unleased forests. Furthermore, from 1897 onwards, it tried its best to enforce the government's Announcement concerning the Conservation of Forests which attempted to conserve young trees by fixing minimum girth and height for cutting.¹

The Mines Department was placed under the Ministry of the Interior in the same year as the Forestry Department. Unlike the Forestry Department, it was already a fully formed department which had been under the Ministry of Agriculture. It was transferred to the Ministry of the Interior when the Ministry of Agriculture was temporarily merged with the Ministry of Finance. Like the Forestry Department, its job was to continue the government's efforts to prevent any con-

1. A.C. Carter, The Kingdom of Siam (New York and London, 1904), p. 176.

flict from arising between foreign (largely British) mineral concessionaires and either local authorities or Chinese labourers which had been taking place from 1875 onwards in the southern provinces. In 1898, the Ministry appointed another Englishman, H.G. Scott, as the Director of the Department again presumably in order to facilitate its public relations with the concessionaires. In the same year, the Department sent its first mines commissioners (khaluang Lohakit), Phra Phiset Lohakit (M.R. Prawet Chumsai), to Phuket. The mines commissioner then took over from the Permanent Commissioner's headquarters the task of issuing concessions and inspecting leases throughout the southern provinces.¹

The Provincial Gendarmerie Department was founded as a department within the Ministry of the Interior in 1897. The Ministry probably created the Department for two reasons. First of all, as it was responsible for the provincial administration, it had to have a department which would be directly concerned with the maintenance of law and order in the provinces. Secondly, it also had to create a department which would take over from the army the job of trying to keep the peace in certain areas and centralize the regional police forces founded by some of its officials on their own

1. Krom Lohakit, Prawat Krom Lohakit anuson wan sathapana Krom Lohakit khrop rop 72 pi, The History of the Mines Department published on the 72nd anniversary of its foundation (Bangkok 1963), p. 59.

initiative in a few of the provinces. The Ministry appointed a Dane, G. Shau, as the first Director of the Department.¹ In the first two years of its existence, the Department sent gendarmerie commissioners (nakhonban monthon) to take over from army officers in Prachinburi, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Chiangmai, and from regional police commanders in Ayutthaya, Nakhon Chaisi, and Ratburi. The commissioners then reorganized the forces which they had inherited from their predecessors, standardized procedures, and renamed the policemen, the provincial gendarmes.²

The Provincial Revenue Department was placed under the Ministry of the Interior in 1899. Like the Mines Department, it was already a fully formed Department under an English Director, F.H. Giles, and had been under the Ministry of Finance. It was transferred to the Ministry of the Interior for a number of reasons. First of all, the Financial Adviser to the government, the Englishman Rivett-Carnac, recommended that the fiscal and financial branches of the Ministry of Finance should be separated in order to enable them to check on each other's work. He suggested that the fiscal administration in the provinces should be transferred to the

1. For political reasons, it was a policy of the government to hire technical advisers from as many different countries as possible.

2. A. Wright, ed., Twentieth Century Impressions of Siam (London, 1908), pp. 110-111.

Ministry of the Interior which was responsible for the provincial administration. The Ministry of the Interior itself was more than prepared to accept the Provincial Revenue Department because its officials were by that time already beginning to take over the collection of taxes from the local authorities in the provinces. From 1899 onwards, the Provincial Revenue Department began to send revenue commissioners (khaluang sanphakon) to take charge of the fiscal administration in the provinces.¹

During Prince Damrong's first seven years of office, between 1892 and 1899, the traditional Ministry of the North was thus transformed into the modern Ministry of the Interior. The old ministry, the sphere of activities of which had overlapped those of other ministries, became a ministry, the function of which was clearly differentiated. The old departments the responsibilities of which overlapped each others' became functionally differentiated departments. New men were recruited and given a new professional training. New departments were added to the new ministry. The Ministry of the Interior's reorganization and expansion of its central administration were both its response to and its anticipation of the increase in its activities during the years which also saw it searching for a new system of provincial administration.

1. Krasuang kan Khlang, Ruang Krom Sanphakon Nok, On the Provincial Revenue Department (Bangkok 1962), p. 11.

The search for a new system of provincial administration.

From October to December of 1892, Prince Damrong made a tour of eighteen of the Ministry of the North's provinces, during which he critically examined the traditional system of provincial administration. It did not take him long to discover its intrinsic defects. He was amazed, first of all, by the distance which existed between the central government and the provincial administration, even though he had taken for granted that the government did not directly administer the provinces. He described how,

'Officials came to whisper to Phraya Woraphut Phokhai, the senior official accompanying me, to ask him what had happened that had made me come up to the north, for, previously, the Minister would come only if important events, such as a war, had occurred. Hardly anyone understood, when Phraya Woraphut replied that nothing had happened, and that I had only come to inspect the provincial administration. They all thought that I was a tourist travelling where I liked, for, although a minister, I was but a young man unlike the ministers of former times.'¹

Prince Damrong noted that the governors made a living out of the provincial administration by using their position to promote their own commercial interests, to protract legal proceedings for the sake of judicial fees, and to embezzle the

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., p. 23.

central government of its revenue.¹

Prince Damrong also discovered that the quality of the personnel of the traditional provincial administration was generally poor. He strongly criticized many of the governors' personal behaviour, although he had noted as a matter of fact their making a living out of the provincial administration. He disliked the governor of Angthong not so much because he made a living out of judicial fees but because the man tried to keep him in the dark about the state of affairs in Suphanburi. Prince Damrong went to Suphanburi against the advice of the governor of Angthong, who had said that there was an old saying that princes were forbidden to go to the town. He ignored the warning, went to Suphanburi, found that the governor was absent, and was presented with countless petitions against misgovernment.² In his original report to the King, Prince Damrong implied rather than stated that the governors, among whom were the senile governors of Phichit and Sawankhalok, the mentally unbalanced governors of Inburi and Nakhon Sawan, and the 'stupid and deeply absorbed in sexual affairs' governor of Phromburi, were the inevitable by-products of the traditional system of provincial administration.³

1. M.64/13: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private 45, 30 Dec. 1892.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Nithan Borankhadi, Historical Anecdotes, (1st edn., Bangkok 1944), pp. 29-35.

3. M.64/13: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private 48, 8 Jan. 1892.

On his return from this exploratory trip to the provinces, Prince Damrong began the search for a new system of provincial administration. He did not have far to look, for he was able to follow the policies which had previously been laid down and to find ideas in the work which had already been done. He found that his predecessors, between 1874 and 1892, had reached the consensus of opinion that there were five steps which led towards the centralization of the provincial administration. They thought, first of all, that the government should continue to create High Commissionerships, which would centralize the provincial administration at a superstructural level. Secondly, it should terminate the provincial nobility's almost independent existence by transforming them into salaried civil servants. Thirdly and fourthly, it should systematically nationalize the judicial and financial administration of the provinces.¹ Finally, Prince Damrong, following the example set by Prince Sanphasitthiprasong who was the High Commissioner in Nakhon Ratchasima, thought that the government should secure the co-operation of the people for the lower levels of every sphere of the provincial administration.²

The timing of the creation and the siting of the first commissionership during Prince Damrong's tenure of office was

1. M.204/51: Minutes of a Cabinet meeting, 11 June 1891.

2. M.1/37: Damrong to Prasit Sanlakan, 12/1676, 20 June 1892.

determined, however, not so much by deliberate planning as by the external pressure exerted upon Siam by France from 1891 to 1893. As relationship between the two countries deteriorated towards breaking point in the first months of 1893, Prince Damrong established the commissionership of Prachinburi, the function of which was to facilitate the movement of troops and supplies between the central plains and the eastern frontier.¹ The commissioner, Phraya Ritthirong Ronnachet (Suk Chuto) competently performed his duties but his efforts inevitably made no difference to the result of the fighting.² In the settlement which followed the war, Siam, apart from being politically humiliated and financially penalised, was territorially reduced. She was forced to agree to the French occupation of the eastern province of Chanthaburi pending her implementation of the terms of the peace treaty and to withdraw all troops to a position twenty-five kilometres from the Mekong River, in which zone the French were permitted to trade without fiscal hindrance. Above all, Siam was deprived of all her territories on the left bank of the Mekong River.³

Once the crisis of 1893 had passed, it became possible to

1. Krasuang kan Khlang, op.cit., p. 6.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., pp. 47-48.

3. P. Duke, Les Relations entre la France et la Thaïlande au XIX Siècle (Bangkok 1962), pp. 156-179.

establish commissionerships after more conscious deliberations. Prince Damrong, like his predecessors, believed that a commissioner should be responsible not only for the province in which he was resident but also for a certain number of the surrounding provinces. He felt that a commissioner should be able to superintend personally five to six provinces. The shape of a commissioner's unit of provinces should be determined by such natural features as rivers.¹ Between 1893 and 1899, the Ministry of the Interior established fourteen commissionerships on these principles. The commissioner was given the new name of superintendent commissioner or khaluang thesaphiban, and his area of jurisdiction was called an administrative circle or monthon.² The monthons came into being in the following order: Prachinburi and Nakhon Ratchasima (1893), Phitsanulok (1894), Nakhon Chaisi, Nakhon

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., p. 44 and p. 46.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., p. 42 and p. 47. I have translated khaluang thesaphiban as 'superintendent commissioner', in order to distinguish him from a 'commissioner' or khaluang, a 'permanent commissioner' or khaluang pracham huamuang, and a 'High Commissioner' or Khaluang Yai. The word thesaphiban was compounded from three Siamese words of Pali origin, namely thet or thesa meaning 'country', aphi meaning 'in particular', ban or bala meaning 'to be in charge of something', and can be translated literally as 'to be in charge of a particular area of the country'. I did not wish to render khaluang thesaphiban as 'resident', because the latter word has connotations of Dutch and British administration in Indonesia and Malaya, which would convey a false impression of the role of the Siamese superintendent commissioner.

Sawan, and Ratburi (1895), Ayutthaya, Burapha, Chumphon, and Nakhon Sithammarat (1896), Kedah (1897), Phuket (1898), Phetchabun and Udon (1899).¹

The creation of the monthons was, however, determined as much by principles as by strategic considerations. Monthons Phitsanulok and Phetchabun, which lay between the permanent commissionership of Chiangmai and monthon Udon, closed the gap on the north-eastern frontier which adjoined the French Kingdom of Luang Prabang. Monthons Nakhon Sawan and Ratburi, which lay between the permanent commissionership of Chiangmai in the north and monthon Phuket in the south, superintended the western provinces which faced British Burma. The southern monthons of Kedah and Nakhon Sithammarat superintended the Malay tributary states, which faced the Malay states, Pahang, Perak, Negri Sembilan, and Selangor, under the British Residential administration. The High Commissionership of Nakhon Ratchasima and the commissionership of Prachinburi, both of which had been established earlier for military reasons, were transformed into monthons with clearly defined areas of jurisdiction after the settlement of the crisis of 1893. The commissionership of Battambang, which had been

1. See Appendix II for the complete list of monthons and the dates of their establishment, and Appendix III for the provinces placed under them, p.408, and p.411.

responsible for the maintenance of the peace in the provinces adjoining French Cambodia since 1876, was transformed into monthon Burapha in 1896. The permanent commissionership of Phuket and the High Commissionership of Udonthani were respectively transformed into monthons Phuket and Udon in 1898 and 1899. By 1899, seven years after Prince Damrong first became the Minister of the North, the establishment of fourteen monthons and the maintenance of the permanent commissionership of Chiangmai and the High Commissionership of Ubonratchathani meant that the government had succeeded in centralizing almost the entire provincial administration at the superstructural level.

The choice of superintendent commissioners reflected to a certain extent the strategic considerations of the reform. The Ministry of the Interior borrowed high-ranking officers from the army, and sent them to certain monthons. The superintendent commissioners of monthons Burapha, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Nakhon Sawan were colonels, and those of Ayutthaya and Prachinburi were major-generals. It sent a police officer to monthon Nakhon Chaisi which was notorious for lawlessness. The Ministry did, however, appoint civilians to the majority of monthons, namely Chumphon, Kedah, Nakhon Sithammarat, Phetchabun, Phitsanulok, Phuket, Ratburi and Udon.¹

1. See Appendix IV for a list of the superintendent commissioners, p. 413.

The Ministry was the absolute master of both the military and civilian commissioners. It was also their paymaster and gave them a standard salary of five hundred baht per month or six thousand baht per year.¹

The centralization of the provincial administration at the superstructural level was accompanied by the search for the means to centralize systematically the other spheres of the provincial administration. The abandonment of haphazard measures in favour of a more methodical approach constituted the signal difference between the reform of the provincial administration before and after 1892. The task was facilitated by the fact that the superintendent commissioners were given exactly the same responsibilities and the size of their monthons was approximately the same. The Ministry of the Interior encouraged them to discuss problems of mutual interests, to exchange ideas, and to co-ordinate their activities by arranging for an annual meeting of the superintendent commissioners, the first of which took place in January of 1896.²

1. M.73/13 Bunch 1: Chatsuren to Chulalongkorn, 25 October 1896.

2. According to the old Siamese way of reckoning, in which the year began on the 1st of April and ended on the 31st of March, the first meeting of the superintendent commissioners took place in 'January of 1895'. Krasuang Mahatthai, Rai-ngan prachum thesaphiban r.s. 114, Report of the meeting of superintendent commissioners in 1896 (Bangkok 1896).

The Ministry of the Interior divided the provincial administration into the administrative, judicial, and financial spheres, in order to facilitate its systematic centralization. It provided each superintendent commissioner with officials, namely the provincial administration commissioner (khaluang mahatthai), the judicial commissioner (khaluang yuttitham), and the financial commissioner (khaluang khlang), who specialized in these three spheres of the provincial administration.¹ As the scope of activities of each monthon expanded, it provided the specialist commissioners with assistants or phu chuai. It paid the specialist commissioners a standard salary of 160 baht per month or 1920 baht per year.² It paid their assistants 100 baht per year.³ Following the appointment of the three specialist commissioners, the Ministry was ready to begin to centralize the three spheres of the provincial administration. It is necessary, however, to point out that, although the Ministry had a general strategy for the centralization of the provincial administration, it encouraged the superintendent commissioners to have a great

1. Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 116/27408, 11 November 1898, published in RKB, xv (1898), 508-512.

2. M.73/13 Bunch 1: Chatsuren to Chulalongkorn, 25 October 1896.

3. M.17/21: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private, 133/21183, 12 September 1895.

deal of initiative. Between 1893 and 1899, each superintendent commissioner conducted his own experiments in the centralization of the different spheres and levels of the provincial administration.

The superintendent commissioners' first task was to establish a working relationship between themselves and the existing provincial administration. When Prince Maruphong Siriphat, the first superintendent commissioner of monthon Ayutthaya, arrived in the city of Ayutthaya, he summoned the eight governors of the monthon to a meeting and explained to them that,¹

'The reason why our sovereign decided to post superintendent commissioners to all parts of the Kingdom was because he wished to promote the greater welfare of his subjects. In sum, he has permanently placed responsible representatives of the Ministry (of the Interior) in the monthons, in order that they might investigate the living condition of his subjects, settle the little disputes that arise between provinces, and rigorously put down banditry.'²

Prince Maruphong probably hoped to calm the governors' fear of a revolutionary reorganization by minimizing the fact of

1. Prince Maruphong Siriphat will hereafter be referred to as Prince Maruphong. The diminutive form of the Prince's name, like that of Prince Damrong for Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, was used in both printed and manuscript sources.

2. M.6/20: Maruphong to Damrong, copy 42100, 22 February 1896.

his presence and emphasizing his role as being merely a representative in the provinces of the Ministry of the Interior. Prince Damrong himself defined the original role of the superintendent commissioner as being an intermediary, through whom the Ministry of the Interior conveyed directives to the governors and obtained information regarding the provincial administration.¹ Prince Maruphong did, however, indirectly hint at the forthcoming reforms even at his first meeting with the governors. He asked them to supply him with information concerning the number of officials in the provinces, their judicial fees and the number of cases pending judgement in the courts, their share of the rice tax, the amount of revenue owing to the government, and the number of common people in the monthon.²

Having established a working relationship with the existing provincial administration, the superintendent commissioners then assumed the authority to enforce law and order throughout the monthons. They wanted to establish that internal order, which the government considered to be a guarantee against external interference and a precondition for

1. Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 116/27408, 11 November 1898, published in RKB, xv (1898), 508-512.

2. M.6/20: Maruphong to Damrong, copy 42100, 22 February 1896.

all the other reforms. Each superintendent commissioner created his own police force or phontrawen which patrolled his monthon. In 1896, Phraya Sunthararuchai (Thet Bunnag), the first superintendent commissioner of monthon Ratburi, used the income from the crown property in his city of residence to pay for fourteen policemen.¹ In 1897, Phraya Suntharaburi (Chom Suntharanchun), the second superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Chaisi, inherited from his predecessor, who was a police officer, a force of a hundred policemen, which was divided between the five provinces of his monthon.² The policemen were supposed to enforce byelaws which were decreed by the monthon administration. In monthon Ratburi, for instance, they checked the papers of travellers, and were empowered to hold suspicious characters for interrogation.³ In monthon Ayutthaya, they supervised bars and opium dens, enforced the ban on pawnshops, and arrested those who carried fire-arms at night.⁴ In monthon Nakhon Sithammarat, the local policemen enforced the ban on gambling

1. M.5/61: Surinthararuchai to Damrong, 16 January 1896.

2. M.4/6: Suntharaburi to Damrong, 30 September 1898.

3. M.5/61: Surinthararuchai to Damrong, 16 January 1896.

4. M.35/25: Maruphong to Damrong, 104/3597, 16 September 1898.

saloons in the province of Phatthalung.¹

The superintendent commissioners' assumption of authority to enforce law and order was accompanied by their attempts to terminate the existing provincial administration's almost independent existence. Prince Damrong, as soon as he became the Minister of the North, put an end to the practice whereby positions in the provincial administration were obtainable upon payment of fixed charges.² From this time onwards, the Ministry of the North and then the Ministry of the Interior, through the agency of the superintendent commissioners, launched attacks from various directions upon the existing provincial administration. Prince Damrong himself led the frontal assault, when he peremptorily dismissed the excessively corrupt governors of Suphanburi and Kamnoet Nopphakhun in 1892 and 1896.³ Phraya Ritthirong Ronnachet (Suk Chuto), the first superintendent commissioner of monthon Prachinburi, followed Prince Damrong's example and dismissed a number of unco-operative officials in his monthon.⁴ Prince Naruphong, following Prince Damrong's example of retiring the governor of Angthong in 1892, retired a great number of local officials

1. M.32/20: Damrong to Sommot, 833/24180, 17 October 1896.

2. M.10/19: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 33/1926, 4 July 1892.

3. M.64/13: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private 43, 3 January 1893, and M.13/13: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 7 December 1896. Kamnoet Nopphakhun is now a district in the province of Prachuap Khirikhan.

4. M.24/20: Ritthirong Ronnachet to Damrong, 250, 30 January 1896.

when he became the superintendent commissioner of monthon Ayutthaya.¹ He made others redundant when he suppressed the small provinces of Inburi and Phromburi and amalgamated them to the province of Singburi.² He then frightened the remaining local officials in his monthon by imprisoning for a while three unco-operative officials from Angthong, which method of intimidation had first been employed by Prince Damrong against the governor of Kamphaengphet in 1895.³

The superintendent commissioner followed up their attack with attempts to seize control of the existing provincial administration. The Ministry of the Interior posted men to fill positions which were made vacant by either deaths or dismissals or forced retirements. In 1895, for instance, it sent a man to fill the vacant governorship of Nakhon Chaisi.⁴ By that year, the Ministry was, however, already beginning to dispense with sending Bangkok personnel to the provinces, because it had enough men in the monthons, whom it could transfer from monthon to monthon and from superintendent commissioners' head quarters to provincial

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1. M.35/25: Maruphong to Damrong, 104/3597, 16 September 1898.
 2. M.73/13 Bunch 4: Maruphong to Damrong, 29 August 1896.
 3. ibid., and M.25/21: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 177/30901, 26 November 1895.
 4. M.123/51: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, 19 November 1895.

governorships. In this way, it transferred the provincial administration commissioner of monthon Phitsanulok to the governorship of Phichai in 1895.¹ In 1896, Phraya Sukhumnawinit (Pan Sukhum), the first superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Sithammarat, followed this example, and transferred one of his men to the vacant governorship of Phatthalung.²

The superintendent commissioners not only attempted to take over but also to transform the existing administration by converting the provincial nobility into salaried civil servants. They took away the existing administration's traditional income which came from such sources as judicial fees, commutation tax, in cash and in kind, the Chinese poll tax, excise taxes, tax-farms, inland transit duties, export and import taxes, and used a part of it as salaries for the provincial nobility.³ In this way, Phraya Sisuriyaratchawanuwat (Choei Kanlayanamit) was able to give salaries to the

1. M.117/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn 666/15258, 2 August 1895.

2. M.11/25: Sukhumnawinit to Damrong, 4 October 1898. I have so far been able to find only one indirect reference to the governor's salary during this formative period. The governor of the first class province of Ayutthaya, Phraya Chaiwichit, who was salaried in 1895 before the establishment of monthon Ayutthaya, was paid 320 baht per month or 3840 baht per year. M.10/22 Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 102/17586, 14 August 1895.

3. Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 116/27408, 11 November 1898, published in RKB, xv (1898), 508-512.

officials of the province of his residence as soon as he became superintendent commissioner of monthon Phitsanulok in 1894.¹ He then insisted that Phitsanulok's administration should be conducted along functionally differentiated lines in practice as in theory. Apart from the governor, the deputy governor, and the assistant, who were given responsibility for the province as a whole, he made two officials responsible for the provincial administration, three for the judicial administration, two for the financial administration, two for public works, two for post and telegraph, and one for education. He also gave them eight clerks, four of whom were attached to the provincial court.² The other superintendent commissioners copied this model, but introduced minor variations to suit the needs of their particular monthons.³

The Ministry of the Interior took the provincial nobility, who had been transformed into salaried civil servants, into the reformed provincial administration. It thereby followed Prince Phichit Prichakon's and Prince Prachak

1. M.7/31: Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat to the deputy governor of Phitsanulok, 4 July 1894.

2. ibid.

3. I have so far been able to find only one indirect reference to the deputy governor's salary during this period. The deputy governor of Chanthaburi, who was salaried in 1895 before the establishment of monthon Chanthaburi, was paid 160 baht per month or 1920 baht per year. M.130/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 90/16271, 8 August 1895. I have so far been unable to discover how much the Ministry of the Interior paid the other officials.

Sinlapakhom's method of compensating the provincial nobility for their loss of power and prestige by taking them into government service. By taking the provincial nobility into the national civil service, the Ministry was, however, not only buying acquiescence to reforms but also working towards other political ends. In 1896, Prince Damrong freely admitted that the transfer of the governor of Singburi to the head quarters of monthon Nakhon Sithammarat was politically expedient, for,

'Phra Phisan Songkhram is an eager administrator, who is capable of improving the (local) administration, but he has solid roots in Singburi and cannot really govern that province with firmness.'¹

Prince Damrong justified the necessity to sever the provincial nobility from their local attachments, when he refused to promote the deputy governor of Phichai to that city's governorship in 1895 on the grounds that,

'He was born and bred in that town, and cannot obtain recognition and respect from its older and arrogant officials.'²

The Ministry of the Interior also took the transformation of the provincial nobility into salaried civil servants to its conclusion, when it asserted its right to sever their local ties, and to transfer them from one part of the country to

1. M.133/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 266/44062, 10 March 1896.

2. M.117/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 126/20615, 8 September 1895.

another. In this way, it made the deputy governor of Uthaithani the governor of Nakhon Sawan in 1893.¹

Parallel with the superintendent commissioners' efforts to take over the provincial administration were their attempts to transform into salaried civil servants the petty nobility who governed the area around the provincial towns. In 1892, King Chulalongkorn and Prince Damrong decided to preserve the existing framework of district administration, in which the area around a provincial town was divided into three administrative units, namely the district (khwaeng or amphoe), which was divided into sub-districts (tambon or khwaeng), and thence into villages (ban or mu ban).² Prince Damrong hoped that, as the governors had been transformed into salaried civil servants, the provincial administration would be able to extend its judicial administration into the districts, and to force the district officers to refer serious criminal cases to the provincial court instead of hushing them up or arbitrarily settling them on the spot.³ Phraya Ritthirong Ronnachet (Suk Chuto), the superintendent commis-

1. M.118/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 50/3603, 31 May 1893.

2. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Seng Wirayasiri), 'Ruang Mahatthai', in Krasuang Mahatthai, op.cit., p. 122.

3. M.1/37: Damrong to Prasit Sanlakan, 12/1676, 20 June 1892.

sioner of monthon Prachinburi, was the first to transform the petty nobility of his monthon into salaried civil servants. In 1894, he gave salaries to three members of the petty nobility of Prachinburi and placed them over districts in that province.¹ He increased the number of salaried district officers to five in the following year.² By 1896, Phraya Ritthirong Ronnachet had succeeded in giving salaries to most of the district officers in his monthon.³ Furthermore, he gave salaries to other members of the petty nobility, and transformed them into deputy district officers, district financial officers, and constables.⁴ The method of transforming the petty nobility into salaried civil servants was immediately followed by the superintendent commissioners of Ayutthaya, Nakhon Ratchasima, and Ratburi.⁵

1. Luang Bamrung Ratthanikon (But Anekbun), Prawat lae khwam song cham, Memoirs (Bangkok 1963), pp. 90-91. The districts were called anakhet, and the officers, chaokrom harirak.

2. ibid., the districts were then called amphoe, and the officers, nai amphoe.

3. M.27/25: A report of a tour of inspection of monthon Prachinburi undertaken between the 13th May and the 11th August 1896: no names, serial numbers, or dates.

4. M.24/20: Ritthirong Ronnachet to Damrong, 250, 30 January, 1896.

5. I have been able to find only one reference to the district officials' salaries during this period. Phraya Surin-thararuchai (Thet Bunnag), the superintendent commissioner of monthon Ratburi, paid the district officials including the district officers fifty baht per month or 600 baht per year. M.29/25 Surin-thararuchai to Damrong, 280/2116, 16 December 1896.

The transformation of the provincial nobility and petty nobility into salaried civil servants was, however, a lengthy process, and the Ministry of the Interior tried to bypass the existing administration by experimenting with government of the countryside through the co-operation of the people. Prince Damrong, having decided to preserve the framework but to change the character of the existing district administration, hoped to be able to do the same thing to the sub-district and village administrations. In June of 1892, he deliberately planned to use the institutions of these two lowest levels of the existing provincial administration as means to set afoot a political, administrative, and social revolution. He outlined his plans in these terms,

'I feel that the next steps to take are more important than any other. Our previous administration of the district, sub-districts, and villages, and our control of the people were largely based on divisions and sub-divisions of the common people. In other words, the government used to mobilize the common people, wherever they lived, through their divisional and sub-divisional heads. These men were thereby enabled to give orders with disregard for district boundaries, as a result of which there were struggles over territories and the common people's service and commutation tax. I plan to reorganize this aspect of the administration by reversing the present state of affairs. I want the people to be under the elder of the village or locality in which they live, and then several elders to be under a commune elder. I do not want the people to be the slaves of any lord or the servants of any master or to give service or commutation tax to any division.

I want to make them all equal citizens, If we can have such a base for our administration, we will naturally be able to mobilize the people, to investigate crimes, and, in general, to order the people more easily than previously.'¹

The Ministry of the Interior put into action the plan to revolutionize the village administration by employing the method which Prince Sanphasitthiprasong had used in Nakhon Ratchasima in 1891. In June of 1892, it sent Luang Thesachitwichan (Seng Wirayasiri) to organize the election of village elders (phuyai ban) and commune elders (kamnan) in the district of Bangpa-in in the province of Ayutthaya. Luang Thesachitwichan asked the heads of ten households, whose houses were situated near one another, to elect a village elder. He then asked the elders of villages, the number of which was governed by the natural features of the locality, to elect a commune elder. He eventually divided the district of Bangpa-in into thirty-two sub-districts (tambons) in this way. He informed the village elders and commune elders that they were responsible for the maintenance of the peace by the prevention of crimes, the settlement of minor civil disputes, and the transfer of all criminal cases to the district officer at Bangpa-in. He remunerated the sub-district officers for their services by paying them approximately three baht

1. M.1/37: Damrong to Prasit Sanlakan, 12/1676, 20 June 1892.

per year and allowing them to keep judicial and registration fees.¹

Between 1892 and 1896, the superintendent commissioners of Phitsanulok, Prachinburi, and Ratburi followed and improved upon the system of village administration established by Luang Thesachitwichan. Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Choei Kanlayanamit) began to persuade the heads of five to twenty households to elect a village elder as soon as he became the superintendent commissioner of monthon Phitsanulok in 1894.² He then asked approximately ten village elders to elect a commune elder.³ The number of households in a village varied from monthon to monthon. In monthon Ratburi, for instance, one village consisted of as many as twenty-two households.⁴ The number of villages in a sub-district also continued to be determined by the natural features of the locality. In monthon Ratburi, the average number of villages in a sub-district was 3.6, while it was 7.6 in monthon

1. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Seng Wirayasiri), 'Ruang Mahatthai', in Krasuang Mahatthai, op.cit., pp. 123-127. I have worked out the sub-district officers' annual remuneration by dividing one hundred baht (the budget allocated to the sub-district officers by Luang Thesachitwichan) by thirty-two (the number of sub-district officers elected in Bangpa-in between June and August 1892).

2. M.20/20: Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat to Damrong, 11352, 8 August 1894.

3. M.17/22: Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat to Thephathibodi, 4/8, 25 June 1894.

4. M.73/13 Bunch 3: Intharathiban and Sanoe-nganpraphat to Chulalongkorn, 14 August 1896.

Phitsanulok.¹ The average for monthons Phitsanulok, Prachinburi, and Ratburi, was 4.8 villages in a sub-district.²

Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat, following Luang Thesachitwisan's example, informed the village and commune elders that they were responsible for the maintenance of the peace. He added, however, that they were also responsible for helping the government to collect taxes.³

Between 1892 and 1898, the superintendent commissioners also enumerated the amount of remuneration for the services of the village and commune elders. Phraya Surinthararuchai (Thet Bunnag), the superintendent commissioner of monthon Ratburi, appeared to have been the first to remunerate the village elders for their services by giving them dispensation from the payment of the commutation tax.⁴ He remunerated the commune elders for their services by allowing them to keep judicial and registration fees, the former of which was worth one baht for each legal settlement.⁵ Phraya Ritthirong

1. ibid., There were 506 sub-districts and 1845 villages in monthon Ratburi. And, M.20/20: Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat to Damrong, 1 April 1899. There were 235 sub-districts and 1771 villages in monthon Phitsanulok.

2. M.27/25: A report of a tour of inspection of monthon Prachinburi between 13th May and 11th August 1896: no names, serial numbers, or dates. There were 86 sub-districts and 390 villages in monthon Ratburi. The average number for the three monthons was reached by dividing 4006 (the total number of villages) by 825 (the total number of sub-districts).

3. M.20/20: Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat to Damrong, 11354, 3 August 1894.

4. M.5/61: Surinthararuchai to Damrong, 16 January, 1896.

5. ibid.

Ronnachet (Suk Chuto), the superintendent commissioner of monthon Prachinburi, fixed the commune elders' registration fees at one baht fifty stangs per item and furthermore allowed them to keep 10% of the rice tax.¹ At the meeting of superintendent commissioners in 1898, it was decided that the village elders should be given a certificate (tra phum) which exempted them from paying six baht's worth of taxes.²

By 1896, the Ministry of the Interior, perceiving the full potentials of the new district and village administrations, decided to formalize their organization. In a ministerial circular dated 21st September 1896, Prince Damrong himself informed the superintendent commissioners and provincial governors that he considered them to be, 'the grass roots of the administration'.³ He urged every superintendent commissioner and provincial governor to organize the election of village and commune elders and to transform the petty nobility into district officers. The Prince recommended the optimum size for villages, sub-districts, and districts. He told the provincial governors to ask the heads of approximately ten households, whose houses were situated near one another,

1. M.27/25: A report of a tour of inspection of monthon Prachinburi between 13th May and 11th August 1896, no names, serial numbers or dates.

2. Krasuang Mahatthai, Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s. 117, Report of the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1898 (Bangkok 1898), pp. 24-25.

3. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuanyut, Tamra Pokkhrong, A text-book on administration, i (2nd edn., Bangkok 1905), p.116. The ministerial circular was entitled 'On the establishment of the district administration', pp. 101-116.

to elect a village elder. The governors should then ask the elders of the villages, the number of which should be determined by the radius of three hours' walk between the central and furthest villages, to elect a commune elder. The superintendent commissioner should transform a member of the petty nobility into a district officer, the area of whose jurisdiction should be determined by either the presence of 10,000 people or the radius of twelve hours' walk from the district office to the furthest village. The provincial governor should inform the village elders that they were responsible for the maintenance of the peace, and the commune elders that they were responsible for the inspection of villages and the collection of taxes. The superintendent commissioner should tell the district officers that they were responsible for the maintenance of the peace, the inspection of the villages and sub-districts, the registration of livestock, the deposition of contracts, the settlement of minor disputes, and the collection of taxes.¹ In 1896 and 1897, the superintendent commissioners of most monthons tried to put this ministerial circular into effect. They tried to organize the election of village and commune elders and to transform the petty nobility into district officers.²

1. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuanyut, op.cit., pp. 101-116.

2. M.4/6: Suntharaburi to Damrong, 30 September 1898. Phraya Suntharaburi (Chom Suntharanchun) referred to the ministerial circular, and gave the following as the serial numbers for it: 12/20944.

In the fourteen monthons which were established between 1893 and 1899, the average number of villages in a sub-district was approximately seven and that of subdistricts in a district was approximately seventeen.¹

The Ministry of the Interior wished, however, not only to formalize but also to take rigorous control of the district and village administrations. In 1895, Phraya Ritthirong Ronnachet (Suk Chuto), the superintendent commissioner of monthon Prachinburi, showed the government how to take over the district administration, when he appointed one of his subordinates as an officer of a district in the province of his residence.² In 1896, the Ministry of the Interior, following that example, tried to take over some of the districts in monthons Nakhon Sithammarat and Phitsanulok. In December of that year, Prince Damrong went to monthon Nakhon Sithammarat in order to inspect a district, the officer of which was not a member of the petty nobility transformed into a salaried civil servant but an official of the Ministry of the Interior. He noted with pleasure that the officer, who looked after a district of 30,000 people, was successfully supervising the village administration by conscientiously

1. See Appendix V for the number of villages, sub-districts, and districts in the monthons which were established between 1893 and 1899, p. 416.

2. Luang Bamrung Ratthanikon, op.cit., p. 93.

inspecting the sub-districts and villages, by settling minor disputes, and by collecting the commutation and rice taxes.¹ The replacement of salaried petty noblemen district officers by officials of the central administration was to become one of the Ministry's aims in the following period.

While the reform of the provincial government's administration was taking place, the Ministry of the Interior was also trying to impose control on its judicial administration. The superintendent commissioners, having assumed the authority to issue and enforce byelaws, went on to ask the governors to refer outstanding cases to the judicial commissioners (khaluang yuttitham), for settlement and adjudication.²

Phraya Sukhumnaiwinit (Pan Sukhum) found that there were 1844 outstanding cases in the province of Nakhon Sithammarat, when he first became the superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Sithammarat in 1896.³ Furthermore, the Ministry found that some of the thousand or so cases, which were outstanding at the establishment of monthon Ratburi in 1895, had been under consideration for the previous twenty years.⁴

1. M.13/13: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 7 December 1896.

2. Damrong Rachanuphap to Chulalongkorn, 116/27408, 11 November 1898, published in RKB, xv (1898), 508-512.

3. M.4/23: Damrong to Sommot Ammoraphan, 122/41845, 27 December 1897.

4. M.73/13: Intharathiban and Sanoeng-anpraphat to Chulalongkorn, 14 August 1896.

The judicial commissioners settled these cases but appeals against their decisions could be made to the superintendent commissioners.¹

Between 1893 and 1896, the superintendent commissioners gradually terminated the independence of the existing judicial administration of the provinces. They introduced judicial measures with the intention of not only establishing internal order but also of undermining the prestige and power of the provincial nobility. Phraya Mahathep (But Bunyarattaphan), the first superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Chaisi, undermined the local nobility's prestige, when he ruled that the people were always entitled to make appeals from the provincial courts to the judicial commissioner.²

Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Choei Kanlayanamit), the superintendent commissioner of monthon Phitsanulok, weakened the provincial nobility, when he took away their judicial fees, which formed a portion of their income and were a part of the component of their political power. He then used the appropriated fees as a part of the salary for the provincial nobility, and insisted that these salaried civil

1. Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 116/27408, 11 November 1898, published in RKB, xv (1898), 508-512.

2. M.26/20: Suntharaburi pp. Mahathep to Damrong, 33056, 20 December 1896.

servants should then conduct the administration along functionally differentiated lines, and that only three of them should be responsible for the judicial administration.¹

Once the superintendent commissioners had gained control over the traditional judicial administration, the Ministry of the Interior had no qualms about making district officers refer major criminal cases to the provincial courts. At the same time, it had no misgivings about making commune elders refer minor criminal cases to the district officers once the provincial petty nobility had been transformed into salaried civil servants.²

By 1896, the government decided, however, that it was not only going to terminate the independence of the judicial administration in the provinces but also to reform its basic structure. On 19th January 1896, it promulgated a 'Constitution for the provincial courts' or the 'Phrathammanun san huamuang'.³ It thereby implemented King Chulalongkorn's policy of improving the efficiency of the administration through functional differentiation, for the Constitution

1. M.7/31: Sisuriratchawaranuwat to the deputy governor of Phitsanulok, 4 July 1894.

2. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Seng Sirayasiri), 'Ruang Mahatthai', in Mahatthai, Krasuang, op.cit., pp. 123-127.

3. 'Phrathammanun san huamuang', 'The Constitution for the provincial courts', RKB, xii (1896), pp. 392-399.

separated the judicial administration from the provincial government's administration, removed it from the control of the Ministry of the Interior, and placed it under the Ministry of Justice. The Constitution transformed the judicial commissioner of each monthon and the three officials responsible for the judicial administration of each province into judges (phu phiphaksa) of the Ministry of Justice. At the same time, however, the government took the logical step of making the Ministry of the Interior responsible for appointing the public prosecutors (yokkrabat monthon), since the superintendent commissioners had already assumed the authority to issue and to enforce byelaws. The Constitution, furthermore, laid down rules that the sentences of death and confiscation could only be passed by the Supreme Court in Bangkok, that the judicial commissioner should have two assistant judges, that the provincial judges could fine up to 5000 baht and order scourging according to the amount specified by law, and that district officers could fine, imprison, and order scourging according to their seniority in the civil service and the amount laid down by the Constitution.¹ Nine months later, the government sent Prince Raphi Phatthanasak and two other high-ranking officials

1. 'Phrathammanun san huamuang', RKB, xii (1895), pp. 392-399.

from the Ministry of Justice to try to put these measures into effect in monthon Ayutthaya.¹ The superintendent commissioners of monthons Phitsanulok and Nakhon Sithammarat followed Prince Raphi Phatthanasak's example and tried to reform the judicial administration of their monthons in the same year.²

While the reform of the provincial government's judicial administration was taking place, the Ministry of the Interior was also trying to impose control on its financial administration. There were three reasons why the Ministry of the Interior had to make its control over the financial administration of the provinces more rigorous. First of all, it had to find the money which the government needed to finance the reform of the administration.³ Secondly, the superintendent commissioners introduced financial measures with the intention of weakening the power of the provincial nobility. Finally, Prince Damrong felt that the superintendent commissioners should be instrumental in increasing the government's revenue, in order that they might demonstrate the merits of

1. Sutcharit Thawonsuk, Kan chat san huamuang khrang raek, The first reform of the judicial administration in the provinces (Bangkok 1964), p. 17.

2. M.20/20: Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat to Damrong, 27873, 13 November 1896, and M.13/13: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 7 December 1896.

3. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., p. 49.

the new system of provincial administration.¹ Prince Damrong himself showed the way to extract money from the provincial nobility when he toured some of the Ministry of the North's provinces in 1892. He made a bargain with the provincial nobility, whereby he let them off a half of their long-standing tribute money (ngoen suai) debts to the Ministry of Finance, if they were able to make a full and immediate settlement. He was highly successful and within three months raised 200,000 baht for the government.² In 1894, Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Choei Kanlayanamit) of monthon Phitsanulok followed Prince Damrong's example but made the conditions more stringent. He made the provincial nobility of monthon Phitsanulok pay their debts of 1891 to 1894 to the full, let them off one third of their previous debts if they were able to make full and immediate settlement, but otherwise forced them to pay 90% of the total owing to the Ministry of Finance.³

Between 1892 and 1899, the superintendent commissioners gradually terminated the independence of the financial administration of the provinces. Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat's

1. Krasuang Mahatthai, Rai-ngan prachum thesaphiban r.s.114, Report of the meeting of superintendent commissioners in 1896 (Bangkok 1896), p. 13.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., pp. 49-51.

3. M.20/20: Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat to Damrong, 1 April 1899.

reform of the common people's service and commutation tax in monthon Phitsanulok illustrates how the superintendent commissioners introduced financial measures with the intention of increasing the government's revenue and weakening the provincial nobility at the same time. In 1894, he undermined the provincial nobility's prestige and power by abolishing their right to demand personal service from a number of the common people, and enabled all the common people to pay the standard commutation tax of eighteen baht per year. In the following year, he took over the collection of the commutation tax, and raised the revenue from this source from 27,760 baht to 35,525 baht. In 1896, he began to ruin the provincial nobility's fortune and to finally sever their relationship with the common people, when he abolished their 6% share of the commutation tax, on the grounds that he had already transformed them into salaried civil servants. Phraya Sisuriratchawaranuwat's ruthless attack on the provincial nobility's finances was highly successful, for he reduced 237 out of 348 noblemen of monthon Phitsanulok to bankruptcy between 1896 and 1898.¹

The superintendent commissioners took over the collection of other taxes as well as of the commutation tax. Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat took over the Chinese poll tax and

1. M.20/20: Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat to Damrong, 1 April 1899. The income from the rice tax in monthon Phitsanulok rose from 55,306 baht in 1894 to 73,547 baht in 1896.

the rice tax as soon as he became the superintendent commissioner of monthon Phitsanulok in 1894. He was able to increase the government's income from the rice tax of monthon Phitsanulok by nearly a quarter within two years of his appointment.¹ In the following year, Phraya Ritthirong Ronnachet (Suk Chuto) took over the water tax in monthon Prachinburi.² In 1896, Phraya Kraiphet Rattanasongkhram (Chae Bunnag), the superintendent commissioner of Nakhon Sawan, followed his colleagues' example and took over the rice and teak taxes in his monthon.³ In the same year, the superintendent commissioners, following the example set by Prince Prachak Sinlapakhom and Prince Phichit Prichakon when they were respectively the High Commissioners of Nongkhai and Bassac, decided to nationalize such tax-farms as the gambling, liquor, opium, sweets sale, chicken, duck, and pig slaughter farms.⁴

By 1896, however, the government decided that the Ministry of Finance rather than the Ministry of the Interior should control the monthon financial administration. It once

1. Krasuang kan Khlang, op.cit., pp. 7-8.

2. M.73/13 Bunch 1: Chatsuren to Chulalongkorn, 25 October 1896.

3. Krasuang Mahatthai, op.cit., p. 31.

4. Krasuang Mahatthai, op.cit., p. 31.

again implemented King Chulalongkorn's policy of improving the efficiency of the administration through functional differentiation, for it terminated the superintendent commissioners' right to spend the revenue and to ask only afterwards for the Ministry of Finance's permission, removed the financial administration from the superintendent commissioners' control, and transferred the financial commissioners (khaluang khlang) to the Ministry of Finance.¹ It presumably felt that the monthon finances, as the revenue and expenditure rose, were growing too complicated for the non-specialists. From 1896 onwards, the superintendent commissioners obtained the money for salaries and construction projects from the financial commissioners, who had been transformed into representatives of the Ministry of Finance. The government, however, left the Ministry of the Interior with the responsibility for the purely fiscal administration of the monthons, since the superintendent commissioners were already taking over the collection of taxes in the provinces.²

By 1899, the Ministry of the Interior had spent more than six years in the search for a new system of provincial administration. It had tested in the field every measure with which it intended to centralize every sphere and level of the pro-

1. ibid., p. 22.

2. ibid.

vincial administration. It had succeeded in imposing a centralized superstructural administration upon a large number of the provinces, transformed many of the provincial nobility into salaried civil servants, and indeed revolutionized much of the provincial administration. It had tried to establish that internal order, which the government considered to be a guarantee against external interference and a precondition for other reforms. It could even tentatively present graphic proofs of the merits of the new system of administration, for it could claim that it was largely responsible for raising the government's revenue from 15,378,114.19 baht in 1892 to 28,496,029.33 in 1898.¹ It was in this optimistic atmosphere that the Ministry of the Interior decided to enact a bill and to issue regulations for the systematic reform of every aspect of the provincial administration.

1. 'Ngop praman priapthiap ngoen rai-chai thua phraratcha-anachak rawang r.s. 111 - r.s. 122 lae yot ngoen rai-dai pracham pi thua phraratcha-anachak nai raya diao kan', 'The government's revenue and expenditure between 1892 and 1903', Appendix ngo, RKB, xx 1903.

The establishment of the Thesaphiban system
of provincial administration.

In May of 1897, the government promulgated the Edict concerning district administration or the Phraratchabanyat laksana pokkhong thongthi.¹ In February of 1899, the Ministry of the Interior issued the Regulations concerning provincial administration or the Kho bangkhap pokkhong huamuang.² The government and the Ministry of the Interior used the experience acquired in the period of experimentation in order to formulate rules, which formalized the organization of the provincial, district, sub-district, and village administrations. They also inserted rules which were based on their knowledge of Dutch and British colonial administration in South-east Asia.

The Ministry of the Interior hoped to use the Regulations of 1899 as the means to centralize the provincial administration. It wanted to make real the earlier Law of 1802, which had theoretically but not actually centralized

1. 'Phraratchabanyat pokkhong thongthi r.s.116', 'The Edict concerning district administration of 1897', RKB, xiv (1897), 105-125.

2. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuanyut, op.cit., i, 147-219.

the provincial administration.¹ It gave itself and its representatives in the provinces the weapons to undermine and to terminate whatever remained of the provincial administration's independent existence. The Ministry, first of all, reemphasized the point that the governorships were not semi-hereditary and that it was the King who had the sole right to appoint governors. It symbolically stressed this point by announcing that the King would no longer make any governor phu samret ratchakan, which title had enabled the holder to have powers of life and death over the people, but that he would henceforth designate a governor without such powers as phu wa ratchakan. It deprived the provincial government of much of his former patronage. The Ministry itself announced that it would take over the appointment of the deputy governor (palat), the public prosecutor (yokkrabat), and the revenue

1. Ruang Kotmai Muang Thai, Siamese Laws, ed. D.B. Bradley (4th edn., Bangkok, ii, 1881), 498-501. And supra., pp. 24-25.

officer (phu chuai).¹ It made the superintendent commissioners responsible for taking over the appointment of five other officials, two of whom (cha muang and saralek) were destined to be the governor's assistants, one (satsadi) the deputy governor's, one (phaeng) the public prosecutor's, and the last (supphamattra) the revenue officer's assistant. The Ministry planned to leave the governor with the minimum patronage of the appointment of the two most junior provincial officials and the clerks. It even qualified this last vestige of patronage, for it allowed the governors to make these appointments only with the superintendent commissioners' approval.

1. The yokkrabat was the provincial judge until 1896. In that year, the Constitution for the provincial courts separated the judicial administration from the provincial administration and placed it under the Ministry of Justice. From that time onwards the Ministry of Justice was responsible for sending judges to the provinces and the Ministry of the Interior for organizing the public prosecution. The Ministry of the Interior retained the name of yokkrabat for the public prosecutor for the sake of historical continuity.

The phu chuai was the governor's assistant until 1896. In that year, the government separated the financial administration from the provincial administration and placed it under the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance then became responsible for sending financial commissioners to the monthons, and the Ministry of the Interior for the collection of taxes. The Ministry of the Interior retained the name of phu chuai for the provincial revenue officer for the sake of tradition.

Furthermore, it deprived the provincial nobility of their traditional sources of livelihood, for it forbade them to engage themselves in tax-farms or in business. It insisted that officials should have no other sources of income apart from their salaries. The new system of administration accommodated the provincial nobility, who did not wish to abandon their commercial interests or to undertake new duties or to accept fixed salaries, by turning them into powerless 'special advisory officials' called variously krommakan thi pruksa or krommakan phiset or krommakan nok thamniap.

The Ministry of the Interior defined the functions and powers of the provincial officials with precision in the Regulations of 1899. First of all, it firmly placed the governors under the superintendent commissioners. It planned to send all directives to the superintendent commissioners, who in turn were supposed to pass them on to the governors for implementation at the provincial and lower levels of the administration. It ordered the governors to submit monthly and annual reports to the superintendent commissioners. It told the governors, deputy governors, and revenue officers to spend at least sixty days of each year in inspecting the provinces. They should visit each district at least twice a year, each sub-district at least once, and each village as

often as possible. Furthermore, it urged the governors to foster the existing monastery schools and to found state schools, so that the administration would be provided in the future with literate recruits. The Ministry, having burdened the governors with duties, went on to circumscribe their powers. It deprived the governors of absolute control over their subordinates, for it compelled them to inform the superintendent commissioners within seven days of their dismissal of any official appointed by either the superintendent commissioners or the Ministry of the Interior.¹

The government hoped to use the Edict concerning district administration of 1897 as the means to formalize the organization of the district, sub-district, and village administrations. It improved upon the Ministry of the Interior's circular entitled 'On the establishment of the district administration' of 1896 by using the experience acquired in the previous period of experimentation, and the knowledge obtained from Dutch and British colonial administration in South-east Asia. The government, first of all, empowered the superintendent commissioners to demarcate the district boundaries. It agreed with the ministerial circular of 1896 that a district officer's area of jurisdiction should be

1. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuanyut, op.cit., i, 147-219.

determined by either the presence of approximately 10,000 people or the radius of twelve hours' walk from the district office to the furthest village. It authorized the superintendent commissioners to appoint the district officers (nai amphoe). It gave the governor a little patronage over the district administration, for it enabled him to recommend three men for each district officership. The superintendent commissioners remained predominant for they could not only appoint but also dismiss the district officers. The government allowed the district officers in their turn to have some patronage, for it enabled them to choose the deputy district officer (palat amphoe), district financial officer (samuhabanchi amphoe), clerks, and constables. The superintendent commissioners again remained predominant, for they had to confirm these appointments. The government followed the example of British administration in Burma in regarding the executives of this level of the administration as the most junior officials of the national provincial civil

service.¹

The government loaded the district officers with manifold duties. While Prince Damrong had considered the district and village administrations to be, 'the grass roots of the administration', the government seemed to regard the district administration in particular as the pivot upon

1. The British equivalent to the Siamese district in Burma was the sub-district, the officer of which was called the assistant commissioner. Indian Civil Service officers started their career at this level of the administration. F.S.V. Donnison, Public Administration in Burma (London 1952), pp.28-33.

The Edict concerning district administration of 1897 and the Regulations concerning the provincial administration of 1899 owed a great deal to the British colonial administration of South-east Asia because, by the late 1890s, the government knew a great deal about the British administration in Burma and Malaya. Three of the Princes who were closely involved with the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration had paid visits to Burma before 1892. Besides Prince Sanphasit-thiprasong, Prince Maruphong Siriphat had also visited Burma in 1891. Prince Damrong himself had passed briefly through Burma in 1892. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Prawat Bukkhon Samkhan Chabap Sombun, Biographies of Important Men (Bangkok 1962), p. 9; and, Sutcharit Thawonsuk, Phra Prawat lae ngan khong Somdet Phraborommawongthoe Krom Phraya Damrong Rachanuphap, A Biography of Prince Damrong Rachanuphap (Bangkok 1965), ii, 215.

In 1893, Prince Damrong sent his close associate Phra Sarit Photchanakon (Seng Wirayasiri), who had in the previous year experimented with village self-government in Bangpa-in, to observe the British administration in Burma and Malaya at first hand. For the following two years, Phra Sarit Photchanakon travelled extensively through Burma and Malaya and sent back detailed reports of their administration which were published in Wachirayan, vi (1894), 584-603, to Wachirayan xxiv (1896), 2392-2403.

which was destined to revolve the entire provincial administration. It wanted the district officer to be the agent between the central government's officials in the monthons and the provinces and the people's elected officials in the sub-districts and villages. It intended to pass all orders to the superintendent commissioners and the governors, who in turn were supposed to pass them on to the district officers for implementation at the sub-district and village levels of the administration. At the same time, it ordered the district officers to make monthly reports to the governors. It told the officers that they must have a thorough knowledge of their districts and that they must visit a sub-district at least once a month. The government followed the ministerial circular of 1896 in making the district officers responsible for the maintenance of the peace, the overall direction of the commune and village elders, the registration of livestock, and the deposition of contracts. It empowered the district officers to suspend commune and village elders for misdemeanour, but it checked this power by making it dependent upon the governors' approval and confirmation.

The government introduced several innovations into the organisation of the sub-district in the Edict concerning district administration. It abandoned the idea that the area of a sub-district should be determined by the radius of

three hours' walk between the central and furthest villages in favour of one that a sub-district should consist of approximately ten villages. It ordered the governors to demarcate the sub-district boundaries, but it deemed it no longer necessary for them to preside over the election of commune elders and that district officers were competent to organize the village elders for that task. Furthermore, it introduced measures which for the first time made changes in commune elders possible. First of all, it allowed the commune elders to retire, and ordered the district officers to organize the village elders for an election to fill the vacancy within two weeks of the retirement. Secondly, the commune elder could be voted out of office by his village elders. Finally, the governor could dismiss him for misdemeanour.

The government increased the number of the commune elders' administrative functions. Apart from the maintenance of the peace and the inspection of villages, it expected the commune elders to hold two meetings a month of the village elders. This institution was an innovation of the Edict of 1897 and the government must have based it on its knowledge of Dutch administration in Java and the other islands of the Indonesian archipelago, in which the local equivalent of the commune elders (wedana) held four meetings (verdaringen)

a month with the village elders.¹ The government also gave the commune elders the task of collecting such records as cadastral and census surveys. It anticipated opposition to the commune elders' enquiries, and gave them some coercive powers over the people. It empowered them to subject unco-operative persons to a maximum fine of twenty baht or to imprisonment for not longer than one month or to both forms of punishment. Furthermore, it enabled them to take the more recalcitrant to district officers, whom it empowered to subject such persons to a maximum fine of one hundred and sixty baht or to imprisonment for not longer than one month or to both forms of punishment.

The government also introduced several innovations into the organization of the village administration in 1897. It retained the idea that a village should consist of approximately ten households, the number of inhabitants in which was

1. J.S. Furnivall, Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy (2nd edn., Cambridge 1944), p. 125.

The Edict concerning district administration of 1897 and the Regulations concerning the provincial administration of 1899 also owed something to the Dutch administration of Indonesia because, by the late 1890s, the government knew a certain amount about the Dutch administration in Java. King Chulalongkorn had paid a visit to Java in 1871; and he and Prince Damrong together visited the island in 1896. In the accounts of these visits, the King referred familiarly to such Dutch officials as the assistant residents and controleurs (inspectors), and such Javanese officials as the regents (raden) and deputy regents (patih). Rama V, King Chulalongkorn, Raya thang thiao Chawa kwasong duan, Diary kept during two months holidays in Java (Bangkok 1925), p. 156; and, Prince Somnot Ammoraphan, Chotmai het sadet praphat ko Chawa nai ratchakan thi ha thang sam khrao, An Account of King Chulalongkorn's three visits to Java (Bangkok 1925), pp. 43-53.

reckoned to be approximately a hundred. It ordered the governors to demarcate the village boundaries but considered that districts officers were competent to organize the heads of households for the election of village elders. For the first time, it defined who were eligible for village eldership. All persons over twenty one years of age, except the holders of foreign passports and military personnel, could become village elders. The government improved upon the ministerial circular of 1896 when it enabled the heads of households to use a secret ballot to vote for the village elder. It thereby disposed of the embarrassment in which the heads of households had found themselves when they had to decide by a show of hands which of them was to become the village elder. It also introduced measures which made changes in village elders possible for the first time. The heads of households could vote him out of office and the governor could dismiss him if he had either committed a crime or stayed away from the village for more than six months. The government marginally increased the village elders' administrative functions. Apart from the maintenance of the peace, it expected village elders to keep the commune elders well informed of local affairs and to collect and to keep the census up to date. It anticipated opposition to the village elders' enquiries and gave them the same coercive powers as the sub-district

officers. The Edict of 1897 also officially gave village elders and sub-district officers dispensation from the payment of commutation tax as the remuneration for their services to the government.

The government maintained the judicial organization established by the Constitution for the provincial courts of 1896 at the provincial level but altered it at the district and sub-district levels in the Edict of 1897. From 1896 onwards, the Ministry of Justice posted judges to the provinces, and the Ministry of the Interior and its superintendent commissioners were supposed to appoint respectively the provincial and the assistant public prosecutors.¹ At the district level of the judicial administration, however, the government decided that officers should not be responsible for judging criminal cases, all of which should be transferred to the provincial courts. It thereby probably hoped to improve the judicial administration by transferring criminal cases from amateur to professional judges. It left the district officers with civil cases the maximum value of which was fixed at a thousand baht. The district officers were then empowered only to imprison people who would not co-operate with the sub-district officers and village elders. The government followed the example of British administration

1. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuananyut, op.cit., i, 149-150.

in Burma and Malaya in giving civil judicial powers to sub-district officers.¹ It enabled them to judge civil cases the maximum value of which was fixed at one hundred baht. It also empowered them to imprison unco-operative people for not longer than one month. The government gave the village elders no judicial powers but enabled them to have the same ~~coercive~~ powers over the people as the sub-district officers.

The government and the Ministry of the Interior maintained the financial organization developed during the previous period of experimentation but used the Edict of 1897 and the Regulations of 1899 to make it more explicit. In the Regulations of 1899, the Ministry of the Interior and its superintendent commissioners were supposed to appoint respectively the provincial and the assistant revenue officers (phu chuai and supphamattra).² The government hoped that these revenue officers would then be able to tax the people through the agency of the district officers and the commune and village elders. It gave the district officers the task of informing the people of the times for the collection of

1. The Burmese and Malayan equivalents to the Siamese sub-district officers were called respectively the myothugys and the penghulus. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Seng Wirayasiri), Raingan ruang san chamra khwam muang Phama...riapriang mua yang pen Phra Sarit Photchanakon pai suep ratchakan muang Phama mua ph.s.2436, The judicial administration of Burma in 1893 (Bangkok 1926), pp.15-30. And Phra Sarit Photchanakon, (Seng Wirayasiri), 'Khaek Malayu Prathetsarat', 'The Malay Tributary States', Wachirayan, xi (1895), 1251-1266.

2. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuanyut, op.cit., i, 149-150.

various taxes. The government then followed the example of the British administration in Burma in making sub-district officers, the holders of the vital records of cadastral and census surveys, responsible for leading the revenue officers in their tours of tax collection. It also remunerated the commune elders in the same way as the British administration in Burma, when it officially gave them a share in each of the taxes collected.¹

The Edict concerning district administration of 1897 and the Regulations concerning provincial administration of 1899 finally clarified the role of the superintendent commissioners. This was indeed a sign that the age of experimentation during which the superintendent commissioners were left to use their own discretion to initiate reforms was over. The Edict of 1897 and the Regulations of 1899 made the superintendent commissioners responsible for the appointment and dismissal of most provincial officials and all district

1. Phra Sarit Photchanakon (Seng Wirayasiri), 'Withi anggrit kep suai kae phama', 'The British method of collecting commutation tax from the Burmese', Wachirayan, (xi (1895), 1127-1153.

'Phraratchabanyat pokkhrong thongthi r.s.116', 'The Edict concerning district administration of 1897', RKB, xiv (1897), 105-125.

officers, for the confirmation of appointments and dismissals made by the governors and district officers, and for the demarcation of district boundaries.

By 1899, the Ministry of the Interior had completed its basic organization of the monthon administration. The Ministry continued to regard the superintendent commissioners as its chief officers in the provinces through whom it conveyed directives to the other officials and obtained information concerning the provincial administration. It placed directly under their command the provincial administration commissioners, the monthon public prosecutors, the gendarmerie commissioners, and the revenue commissioners. Although the judges and financial commissioners were by this time officials of other ministries, they nevertheless recognized that they were under the indirect command of the superintendent commissioners. By 1899, the superintendent commissioners were thus provided with assistants through whom they could obtain information on all spheres of activities in the provinces and pass orders to all levels of the provincial administration.

The completion of the monthon administration and the regulation of the provincial, district, sub-district, and village administrations brought to an end the period of the Ministry of the Interior's search for a new system of provincial administration. The government had theoretically

centralized every sphere and level of the provincial administration. In the following period, the Ministry of the Interior was to occupy itself with the expansion of its central administration and with attempts to implement, to develop, and to modify its new system of provincial administration, which after the Siamese name for the superintendent commissioner, can conveniently be called the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration.

Chapter IV

The Expansion of the Central Administration,
1899-1915.

Between 1899 and 1915, the Ministry of the Interior expanded its central administration in Bangkok at the same time as it was attempting to implement the Thesaphiban system of administration in the inner and outer provinces and the tributary states. The Ministry's development of its central administration sometimes anticipated and at other times corresponded to the expansion of its centralized provincial administration. During these years, Prince Damrong was able to see the project of dividing the Ministry into ten functional departments which he had submitted in 1891 fulfilled and surpassed.¹ The Prince presided over the increase in the number of departments from eight in 1899 to twelve in 1915. He also watched over the recruitment and training of new officials the number of whom increased in proportion to the expansion of the administration.

Between 1899 and 1915, the Ministry made minor changes in the three central departments which it had created between 1892 and 1899. The most trivial of the changes was

1. M.10/19: Damrong to Rattanakobodin, S 67/72, 8 April 1891.

when it began to call the Central Department (Krom Klang) the Directorate (Kong Banchakan).¹ It maintained the Permanent Under-Secretary as the head of this department and continued to entrust him with the overall responsibility for superintending the work of the Ministry. A more important change took place in 1905 when the Ministry transferred the responsibility for affairs concerning frontier incidents and infringements of extraterritorial rights from the Legal Department (Krom Mahatthai Fai Nua) to the new Secretariat Department (Krom Lekhanukan).² The most significant changes in the old departments were when the Ministry sub-divided the Provincial Administration Department (Krom Phalamphang) and the Legal Department into functional divisions in order to increase their efficiency.

The Provincial Administration Department was divided into the Administration Division (Phanaek Pokkhrong) and the Construction Division (Phanaek Kosang).³ The Administration

1. National Archives, Bangkok, Sixth Reign Papers, vol.3, Series 196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 1, 30 January, 1915. (Hereafter contracted to 3/196, etc.) I have been unable to discover exactly when the Ministry began to call the Central Department the Directorate.

2. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 1, 30 January, 1915.

3. I translate phanaek as 'division' because the unit was the first sub-division of a department during this period.. In the following period, the first sub-division of a department became known as 'kong', and further sub-divisions of the kong then became known as a phanaek.

Division was responsible for the appointment and transfer of all officials at the monthon level and of provincial governors, deputy governors, public prosecutors, and revenue officers.¹ It also dismissed these officials and confirmed the appointment and dismissal of junior provincial officials and district officers who had been appointed by the superintendent commissioners.² Furthermore, it was responsible for inspecting the entire country in order to make sure that officials at all levels understood and implemented the edicts and regulations of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. It was given for this purpose its own inspector (phu truat kan) for the first time in 1903 and received two more in 1908.³ The Construction Department was responsible for building and repairing monthon, provincial, and district headquarters. It was at first able to economise by using its funds to purchase raw material and by demanding free labour instead of commutation tax from the common people. After the promulgation of the Edict concerning the payment of the common

1. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuanyut, Tamra Pokkhrong, A text-book on administration, i, (2nd edn., Bangkok 1905), 147-219. According to the Regulation concerning provincial administration of 1899, the King theoretically appointed and transferred provincial governors, but in reality he did so at the instigation of the Ministry.

2. ibid., 152-153.

3. M.197/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 109/3412, 16 June 1908.

people's service in 1900, it had to rely on prisoners for free labour. It constructed rudimentary public buildings. The walls of its monthon headquarters during this period were made of latticed bamboo or of planks of wood, the roofs were covered with attap palm leaves, and the floors were sometimes nothing more than levelled earth.¹

The Legal Department was divided into the Public Prosecution Division (Phanaek raksa phra-aiyakan), the Criminal Investigation Division (Phanaek suepsuan chon-phurai), and the Penitentiary Division (Phanaek Ruancham). The Public Prosecution Division and the Criminal Investigation Division were responsible for passing relevant information from the Ministry to the monthon and provincial public prosecutors (yokkrabat) throughout the country. The Penitentiary Division was responsible for prisons in all the monthons and provinces. In 1915, Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Seng Wirayasiri), then the acting-Minister of the Interior, thought that Ayutthaya, Chiangmai, Phuket, and Ratburi had the only secure prisons in the country. He went on to say that the insecurity of the other prisons was the reason why the prisoners who could easily escape had to be leniently treated.² Prince Damrong,

1. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuanyut, op.cit., pp. 560-561. Ministerial Regulation I Public Works Division concerning the construction of administrative headquarters.

2. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 1, 30 January 1915.

however, would have added Nakhon Chaisi to the list of monthon headquarters which had secure prisons. The Prince later described how the warder of the monthon gaol, Phra Phutthakasettranurak (Pho Khehanan), kept the prisoners' morale high by allowing them to elect their own cooks and was thereby able to easily organize them to build the new city of Nakhon Pathom. He was so pleased by this efficient management that he used to send warders from other monthons to be trained by Phra Phutthakasettranurak at the gaol of monthon Nakhon Chaisi.¹ The Legal Department as a whole was also responsible for inspecting the country in order to make sure that officials at all levels understood and implemented those aspects of the edicts and regulations which concerned the judicial administration. Like the Provincial Administration Department, it too was given its own inspector for this purpose in 1903 and likewise received two more in 1908.²

Between 1899 and 1915, the Ministry created three new departments, namely the Secretariat Department (Krom Lekhanukan), the Financial Department (Krom Palatbanchi), and the Registry Department (Krom Thabian). The creation of these departments reflected the expansion and the increasing

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Prawat Bukkon Samkhan Chabap Sombun, Biographies of important men, (Bangkok 1962), pp. 298-309.

2. M.197/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 109/3412, 16 June 1908.

complexity of the Ministry's centralized provincial administration. The Secretariat Department was created in order to relieve the administrative burdens from the Central Department which became exclusively involved in the making of new policies. The Financial Department was established as a regular channel of communication through which the Ministry could negotiate with the Ministry of Finance for its share of the budget. The Registry Department was founded as a repository of the records of the ever-increasing activities of the Ministry.

The Secretariat Department was divided into the Secretariat Division (Phanaek Lekhanukan) and the Foreign Affairs Division (Phanaek Tangprathet). As its name implied, the Secretariat Division was primarily responsible for the reception and distribution of correspondence to the relevant departments in the Ministry. It collected the replies and posted them to other ministries and to monthon and provincial headquarters. It directed secret correspondence straight to the Minister's office. It received and investigated all complaints against the administration. It also issued internal passports which asked officials to assist foreigners and officials of other ministries who were travelling through the countryside. Finally, it was in charge of the janitors who looked after the Ministry building in Bangkok. The Foreign

Affairs Division was created in 1905 in order to relieve the responsibility for matters involving frontier incidents and infringements of extraterritorial rights from the Legal Department. Since it had to deal with foreigners it had a foreign legal adviser. It received at first a French Legal Adviser, Henri Ponceau, but it probably found him unacceptable on account of his nationality and soon replaced him with a Belgian called Charles Robyns. In 1910, the Ministry changed the name of the Secretariat Department to that of the Investigation Department (Krom Samruat).¹ It probably wanted to emphasize thereby the Department's role as the investigator of complaints, frontier incidents, and infringements of extraterritorial rights.

The Financial Department was divided into the Accounts Division (Phanaek Banchi-ngoen) and the Personnel Division (Phanaek Banchi-khon). The Accounts Division was the one through which the Ministry negotiated with the Ministry of Finance in order to increase its share in the budget to provide funds and salary for its ever-increasing number of projects and employees. It also rendered to the Ministry of Finance the accounts of the expenditures of every monthon. From 1905 onwards, it obtained the accounts of monthon

1. 1/126: Damrong to Wachirawut, 191/8587, 24 December 1910.

expenditures from the monthon registrars (samiantra monthon). The Personnel Division was responsible for keeping record of the grades of salaries of all officials and for sending the right amount of money to them. From 1901 onwards, it also had to calculate and to pay pensions to officials who had retired from the administration. The pension of an official who had served less than ten years was a lump sum the value of which was based on the multiplication of the salary in his last month of service by the number of years he had spent in the Ministry. The pension of an official who had served more than ten years was a monthly payment the value of which was based on the division of the average salary in his last five years of service by sixty.¹

The Registry Department was divided into the Personnel Division (Phanaek Banchi Kharatchakan), the Census Division (Phanaek Sammanokhrua), the Personnel Records Division (Phanaek Prawat), and the Archives Division (Phanaek Kep Nangsu). The Personnel Division was responsible for the publication, revision, and distribution of lists of officials in monthon, provincial, and district headquarters. It published its first list in 1899. The Census Division took over the Ministry of the North's registers of able-bodied men,

1. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuanyut, op.cit., pp. 496-510.

and began to collect and to revise census figures as they were made available by the monthons. It obtained the first large-scale picture of the population in 1903 when the government undertook a census-survey in twelve monthons.¹ It presented the figures of a nation-wide census-survey to the government for the first time in 1910. The Personnel Records Division fed the Personnel Division of the Financial Department with information which was needed for the calculation of salaries and pensions of the officials. The Archives Division collected drafts and copies of out-going and in-coming correspondence from the Secretariat and the other departments.²

Between 1899 and 1915, the Ministry of the Interior expanded not only the activities and members of its central departments but also those of its subsidiary departments. The Ministry extended the activities of the Forestry Department (Krom Pamai), the Mines Department (Krom Lohakit), the Provincial Gendarmerie Department (Krom Tamruat Phuthon), and the Provincial Revenue Department (Krom Sanphakon Nok) into more provinces whenever it established new monthons. Although

1. 'Ruang tham sammanokhrua huamuang', 'Census survey in the provinces', Thesaphiban, I (1906), 85-103.

2. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 1, 30 January, 1915.

it lost one of its subsidiary departments when it returned the Mines Department to the Ministry of Agriculture in 1909, the Ministry soon acquired two more when it received the Health Department (Krom Phayaban) from the Ministry of Education in 1912 and created the Provincial Criminal Investigation Department (Krom Tamruat Phuban) in 1913.

The Ministry at first consolidated and then expanded the Forestry Department. Between 1899 and 1910, the Forestry Department which remained based in Chiangmai continued its inspection of the forests in the northern tributary states in order to make sure that concessionaires did not cut down trees the girth and the height of which fell below the minimum specifications of the Announcement concerning the Conservation of Forests of 1897. It was particularly busy in 1900 and 1901 when it used the expiration of old concessions as an opportunity to close half the forests for recuperation and to raise the royalty on the trees in the other half of the forests the concessions for which it renewed.¹ In 1910, the Ministry transferred the Department from Chiangmai to Bangkok because it wanted it to look after the forests not only of the northern tributary states but also of the rest of the country.² In

1. A.C. Carter, The Kingdom of Siam (New York and London, 1904), p. 176.

2. Chakkrit Noranitiphadungkan, Somdet Phrachao Borommawong-thoe Krom Phraya Damrong Rachanuphap kap Krasuang Mahatthai, Prince Damrong and the Ministry of the Interior (Bangkok 1963), p. 153.

the following five years, the Forestry Department not only maintained and expanded its activities in the northern tributary states but extended them into a number of the other monthons. By 1915, it had officials in monthons Chumphon, Nakhon Ratchasima, Nakhon Sawan, Phitsanulok, Phuket, and Ratburi.¹

The Ministry also expanded and consolidated the Mines Department before it returned it to the Ministry of Agriculture. In 1899, the Mines Department sent its second mines commissioner (Khaluang lohakit) to the provinces when it posted a Singhalese, J.G. Woodhall, to monthon Nakhon Sithamarat.² Two years later, the government consolidated the work of the Department when it began rigorously to regulate mining throughout the country through the Edict concerning mines of 1901. It thereby authorized the Department to charge fifty baht for each concession it issued, to limit its duration to a maximum of twenty-five years, and to confine its area to forty acres if the deposit occurred above ground and to one hundred and twenty acres if it occurred underground.³

1. Krasuang Mahatthai, Thamniap kharatchakan Krasuang Mahatt-hai lae huamuang Mesayon thung Kanyayon ph.s.2458, A list of officials in the Ministry of the Interior between April and September 1915 (Bangkok 1915), p. 35 et passim.

2. Krom Lohakit, Prawat Krom Lohakit anuson wan sathapana Krom Lohakit khrop rop 72 pi, The History of the Mines Department published on the 72nd anniversary of its foundation (Bangkok 1963), p. 59.

3. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuanyut, op.cit., ii, 1309-1347.

Between 1901 and 1909, the Department sent more commissioners into the provinces in order to implement this edict. By 1915, it had commissioners in Phuket, Nakhon Sithammarat, Kedah, Pattani, Phang-nga, and Ranong.¹

The Provincial Gendarmerie Department was likewise expanded during this period. Between 1899 and 1909, The Provincial Gendarmerie Department established stations in all the monthon headquarters towns.² It also established three hundred and thirty sub-stations in provincial towns and districts.³ The Department at first recruited provincial gendarmes on a voluntary basis but gradually had to make recruitment compulsory in order to make sure that the number of men kept pace with the expansion of activities into the provinces. From 1905 onwards, after the government had promulgated the Edict concerning military conscription, it asked the Ministry of Defence for a number of conscripts each year whom it then trained as provincial gendarmes. The Department also took care that the number and quality of its officials kept pace with the expansion in the number of its men. It

1. Krom Lohakit, op.cit., pp. 113-114.

2. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 4, 23 March 1915.

3. A. Wright, ed., Twentieth Century Impressions of Siam (London 1908), pp. 110-111.

founded for this purpose the Provincial Gendarmerie Officers' Training School at Nakhon Pathom in 1904.¹

The Provincial Revenue Department was similarly expanded during the same period. Between 1899 and 1913, the Provincial Revenue Department gradually succeeded in taking over the fiscal administration of every monthon. In 1909, for instance, it turned the trade in palm leaves (bai lan) on which monks traditionally copied down excerpts from the Buddhist Scriptures and wrote their sermons into a state monopoly when it took over the last independent tax farm on them in Phetchabun.² During this period, the Department gradually abolished internal transit duties which had impeded the Kingdom's economic activities by adding extra costs to goods as well as by causing delays in their transportation. In 1902 and 1905, it also augmented the Kingdom's revenue by increasing the number of fishing licenses throughout the country.³ In 1906, it increased the revenue from the land tax (kha na) by raising the tax to the same level as that of British Burma after Great

1. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 4, 23 March 1915.

2. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 3, 27 February 1915. The palm leaves came from sugar-palm trees (ton tan or borassus flabellifera palmae). G.B. McFarland, Thai-English Dictionary (Stanford 1944), p. 364.

3. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 3, 27 February 1915.

Britain had first agreed that it could raise the tax on land owned by British subjects to that level.¹ In 1910, it made adjustments in the rates of the land tax which benefited both the government and the farmers in the paddy fields. On the one hand it raised the tax on good (wet-rice) farm land (na fang loi) by 20%. On the other hand, it differentiated all farm land into five grades so that it would tax farmers according to the fertility of their soil. It also lowered the tax on new clearings so that it would encourage the farmers to bring more land under the plough.²

The Provincial Revenue Department was divided into six divisions in order to enable it to cope with the expansion of its activities. The Directorate Division (Phanaek Banchakan) was concerned with presenting new fiscal policies to the Ministry and the government. The Inspectorate Division (Phanaek Truatkan) was responsible for making sure that the revenue commissioners (khaluang sanphakon) and revenue officers (phu chuai) in the monthon and provincial headquarters understood and implemented those aspects of the edicts and regulations which dealt with fiscal administration. The

1. J.C. Ingram, Economic Change in Thailand since 1850 (1st edn., Stanford 1955), p. 77.

2. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 3, 27 February 1915.

Registry Division (Phanaek Thabian) issued permits the concession for which lay outside the purview of the Forestry and Mines Departments. It issued, for instance, concessions for elephant round-ups, pig, duck, and chicken slaughter, gambling saloons, and sweet stalls. The Forms Division (Phanaek Baep) supplied the Registry Division and the Department's officials in the provinces with the necessary forms. The Palm Leaves Sales Division (Phanaek Chamnai Bai Lan) managed the state monopoly in this special product. The Financial Division (Phanaek Ngoen) transferred the revenue collected by the Department to the Ministry of Finance.¹

In 1909, the Ministry lost one of its subsidiary departments when it returned the Mines Department to the Ministry of Agriculture. This restitution took place at the instigation of Crown Prince Wachirawut. The Crown Prince made this recommendation after a visit to Phuket during the course of which he came to the opinion that the Department's issue of mining concessions was similar to the Ministry of Agriculture's registration of title deeds. He also felt that the Department should not be concerned with just bureaucratic work but should also be prospecting for new mineral deposits to enrich the Kingdom's resources. Furthermore, he thought that it would

1. ibid.

have a better chance of growth and development by being restored to a small but growing ministry than by remaining attached to a large one which was already burdened by many other activities of the administration.¹

The Ministry made up for the loss of the Mines Department in 1912 when it took over the Department of Health from the Ministry of Education. The Ministry had in fact begun to help with the government's health services in 1906 and 1907 when it sent medical officers to the provinces and told the superintendent commissioners to establish hospitals and to order commune and village elders to elect sub-district doctors.² It was so energetic in these activities that in 1908 the government transferred to it two of the Ministry of Education's divisions which were responsible for health services namely the Prevention of Contagious Diseases Division (Phanaek Pongkan Rok-rabat) which produced smallpox vaccine and inoculated people against smallpox and the Medicine Division (Phanaek Osot Sala) which produced twelve kinds of pharmaceutical preparations. The Ministry thereby became the controller of both the production of vaccine and medicine in Bangkok, and the doctors and hospitals in the provinces. In 1912, the government transferred the only division of the

1. Krom Lohakit, op.cit., pp. 126-127.

2. See infra, p. 331.

Department of Health which remained in the Ministry of Education, Sirirat Teaching Hospital, to the Ministry and enabled it to supervise the training of doctors as well.¹

Between 1912 and 1915, the Ministry vastly expanded the Department of Health. It maintained the Prevention of Contagious Diseases Division and the Medicine Division but added four new divisions to the Department in order to enable it to cope with the expansion of its activities. The Directorate Division (Phanaek Banchakan) presented new medical policies to the Ministry and to the government. The Medical Division (Phanaek Kan Phaet) was in charge of the personnel administration of all the doctors in Bangkok and the provinces. The Prevention of Contagious Diseases Division handed the responsibility for the production of smallpox vaccine and the inoculation of the people against smallpox to a new division, the Pasteur Institute (Pasturasapha), which was founded in 1913. The Pasteur Institute at first produced only smallpox vaccine and anti-rabies serum but it later also developed the capacity for producing anti-typhoid, anti-cholera, and anti-snake poison serums. The Prevention of Contagious Diseases Division then became responsible for the distribution of the products of the Pasteur Institute and the Medicine Division to the doctors and hospitals in the provinces. The

1. 3/196:Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 2, 5 February 1915.

Municipalities Division (Phanaek Sukkhaphiban) supervised the municipalities which in turn financed hospitals, took care of public hygiene in towns and districts, and were generally concerned with arrangements for public health in the provinces.¹

The Ministry also founded the completely new Criminal Investigation Department (Krom Tamruat Phuban) in 1913.² The Ministry had in fact begun to show interest in organizing a force of plain-clothes policemen or police informers as an active arm of the Criminal Investigation Division of the Legal Department nine years before it actually founded the Department. At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1904, Phraya Suntharaburi (Chom Suntharanchun), the first superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Chaisi, recommended his colleagues to establish 'secret police' (polit lap) forces which would strengthen the commune and village elders' efforts to maintain law and order in the countryside. On that occasion, the meeting unanimously rejected the proposal on the grounds that these men themselves would probably become the thugs and bandits.³ At the meeting of the super-

1. ibid., and see also infra, p. 396.

2. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 4, 23 March 1915.

3. M.11/6: Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.123, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1904, typescript, p.151.

intendent commissioners two years later, however, Prince Damrong himself authorized Phraya Sutharaburi to experiment with plain-clothes policemen called public prosecution provincial gendarmes (yokkrabat tamruat phuthon) who would secretly seek to obtain information on thugs, bandits, and receivers of stolen goods in monthon Nakhon Chaisi. The Prince changed his mind on the subject after Prince Maruphong, the superintendent commissioner of monthon Prachinburi, drastically reduced the rate of robbery in Chonburi by discovering and arresting the three most prominent receivers of stolen goods in the province.¹ At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1907, Prince Damrong announced the success of Phraya Suntharaburi's experiment in monthon Nakhon Chaisi and urged the rest of the superintendent commissioners to appoint plain-clothes policemen too. The Prince changed their names to judicial provincial gendarmes (aiyakan tamruat phuthon) in order to avoid terminological confusion and definitely stated that they were responsible for secretly obtaining information in order to facilitate the work of the provincial gendarmes and the monthon and provincial public prosecutors.² It was in

1. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.125', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1906', Thesaphiban, II (1906), 53.

2. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.126', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1907', Thesaphiban, II (1908), 142-154.

order to co-ordinate the activities of the judicial provincial gendarmes that the Ministry founded the Criminal Investigation Department in 1913. The Ministry then changed their names to that of criminal investigation police or (tamruat phuban).

Prince Damrong tried to keep a close personal control over the central administration of his Ministry. The Prince worked out new policies with the assistance of his Permanent Under-Secretary who was ex officio the Director of the Central or the Directorate Department. He also kept the Permanent Under-Secretary informed of his replies to the secret correspondence. At two o'clock every afternoon, he held a meeting to sign the daily correspondence and to discuss issues of current interest with all his Directors of Departments. By 1915, Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Seng Wirayasiri), the then acting-Minister of the Ministry, estimated that the Prince spent an average of two hours in consultation with his Directors of Departments and considered and signed an average of two hundred letters on each day of 1914.¹

Prince Damrong also tried to keep close personal contacts with his officials in Bangkok and in the provinces. The Prince tried to bring as many provincial officials as possible

1. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 1, 30 January 1915.

into Bangkok so that they would acquire experience in both the provincial and the central administration. In 1903, when two posts of inspectors were created in the Provincial Administration Department and the Legal Department, he wanted to use them as the means,

'to make governors take turns to come and learn the administrative practices of the Ministry of the Interior and of monthons other than those in which they served. This would be a good way of finding future deputy superintendent commissioners or even superintendent commissioners.'¹

Five years later, four more inspectorships were divided between these two departments.² During the same period, four other posts of inspectors were established for the same purpose in the Secretariat Department. Two of the inspectorships were given to governors and the other two went to the more junior monthon provincial administration commissioners (khaluang mahatthai).

Prince Damrong found, however, that the small number of inspectorships meant that the rotation of officials from the provinces to Bangkok and vice versa was confined only to a very few men and that he had to devise other methods of maintaining a close personal relationship with the majority of his officials in the provinces. The Prince tried to tour as

1. M.197/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 109/3412, 16 June 1908.

2. M.197/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 109/3412, 16 June 1908.

many provinces as possible in order to get to know his officials and to make sure that they understood and implemented the edicts and regulations of the Thesaphiban system of administration. From his first tour of inspection in 1892 to 1915, he visited most of the former inner and outer provinces.¹ He never visited, however, the northern tributary states, Chiangmai, Lampang, Lamphun, Phrae, and Nan, the eastern outer provinces in monthon Burapha, and the southern tributary states of the Seven Malay Provinces (Khaek Chet Huammuang), Kedah,

1. M.13/13: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 7 December 1896. (A Report of a tour of the southern provinces.) Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Chotmai het raya-thang Phrachao Nongyathoe Krommamun Damrong Rachanuphap senabodi Krasuang Mahatthai sadet truat ratchakan huammuang monthon Krung Kao monthon Nakhon Chaisi monthon Ratburi nai r.s.117, A tour of monthons Ayutthaya, Nakhon Chaisi, and Ratburi in 1898 (Bangkok 1898). Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Chotmai raiwan senabodi Krasuang Mahatthai truat ratchakan muang Chonburi muang Chachoengsao duan Mokkarakhom r.s.119, A tour of Chonburi and Chachoengsao (in monthon Prachinburi), in 1901 (Bangkok 1901). Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Rai-ngan senabodi Krasuang Mahatthai sadet truat ratchakan huammuang fai nua r.s.119, A tour of the northern provinces in 1900 (Bangkok 1900). Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Rai-ngan Phrachao Nongyathoe Krommaluang Damrong Rachanuphap senabodi Krasuang Mahatthai sadet truat ratchakan muang Suphanburi r.s.122, A tour of Suphanburi (monthon Nakhon Chaisi) in 1903, (Bangkok 1903). Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Nithan Borankhadi, Historical Anecdotes (1st edn., Bangkok 1944), pp. 131-157, for a report of a tour of monthon Phetchabun in 1904. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Wa duai thiao monthon Udon lae monthon Isan, On travelling through monthons Udon and Isan, (and Nakhon Ratchasima in 1906), (Ruang Thiao Thi Tang Tang, Collection of Travels, iii, 1920).

Perlis, Satun (Setul), Kelantan, and Trengganu. On the one hand, he probably did not wish to embarrass their rulers by intervening personally in the political integration and bureaucratic centralization of their states.¹ On the other hand, he certainly thought that his personal presence in these states might antagonize their neighbours Great Britain and France, on whose good will depended Siam's independence and territorial integrity.² In 1906, Prince Damrong tried to make up for his inability to be in all places at once by founding the Thesaphiban journal. The Prince then used this monthly organ as a channel of communication through which he informed his far-flung officials of the latest edicts, regulations, and decisions, exhorted them to implement them to the best of their ability, shamed those who were indolent and

1. Although King Chulalongkorn had toured the southern tributary states in 1890, he and Prince Damrong never visited the northern tributary states between 1892 and 1915. Although the King had sent his half-brothers, Prince Phichit Prichakon and Prince Phitthayalap Phrutthithada, to reorganize the administration of the northern tributary states in 1884 and 1887, he and Prince Damrong never visited them during this period because they probably thought that the political integration and bureaucratic centralization of these states then taking place were explosive enough without the additional embarrassment of forcing their Princes to do obeisance (krap) to them.

2. M.23/47: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 262/43047, 4 March 1896.

corrupt, and extolled those who were diligent, honest, and successful.

Between 1899 and 1915, Prince Damrong knew that he had to improve not only the bureaucratic organization but also the quality of the officials in order to make the central administration efficient. The Prince at first continued to recruit his officials from those sources which he had already begun to tap between 1892 and 1899. He recruited old boys of Suan Kulap, a school with which he had been closely associated from 1880 to 1892. He offered, for instance, a place to an old Suan Kulap boy, Nai Khem (Wasantasing), in 1906.¹ Prince Damrong also continued to borrow men from the Ministry of Defence. In 1899, the Prince appointed, for instance, a lieutenant from the army as the deputy governor of Krabi in monthon Phuket.² In 1914, he appointed a colonel as the governor of Nakhon Sawan.³ Prince Damrong even began to borrow men from other ministries besides the Ministry of Defence. In 1900, the Prince appointed an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the governor of Samut Songkhram in monthon Ratburi.⁴ In 1913, he

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Sisip-song phra prawat bukkhon samkhan, Biographies of forty-two important men (Bangkok 1966), pp. 454-457. Nai Khem later became Phra Sunthorathep Kitcharak.

2. M.116/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 38/1178, 27 May 1899.

3. M.202/51: Damrong to Wachirawut, 102/9633, 15 January 1914.

4. M.165/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private, 260/8266, 27 March 1900.

appointed an official of the Ministry of Agriculture as the deputy governor of Phuket.¹ Prince Damrong also continued to use the Ministry as the place to train members of the provincial nobility for service in the provincial administration. In 1905, the Prince trained, for instance, Prince Oui, the son of the Prince of Bassac, in the Ministry and then sent him to join the headquarters of monthon Nakhon Chaisi.² Five years later, he trained Prince Beng, one of Prince Oui's brothers, before he sent him to be the district officer of Phitsanulok.³

Prince Damrong realized, however, that he could not just rely on old means but must devise new ways to improve the quality of his officials. As early as 1894, he expressed to the King his dissatisfaction with the old ways and suggested a new method of recruiting officials for the central administration.

'One of my greatest difficulties is the finding of officials to send to administer the provinces because there is as yet no Civil Service School.⁴ I can only pick and pinch men from here and there

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1. M.202/51: Damrong to Wachirawut, 368/7123, 22 October 1913.
 2. M.193/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 8/485, 20 April 1905.
 3. M.198/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 247/14661, 14 February 1910.
 4. Prince Damrong himself used the English words 'Civil Service School'.

'and I am often guilty of violating your regulations.¹ This is because the men I am looking for must possess several qualities. I must, first of all, be reasonably sure that they have the abilities for the jobs for which they are sent. Secondly, it is even more important that they should wholeheartedly go to do these jobs in the provinces.'²

In the following five years, Prince Damrong had, however, to temporarily abandon the idea of a Civil Service School and to continue to use old means to recruit officials for the central administration while he concentrated all his attention and expended most of the Ministry's resources on laying the foundation for the first twelve monthons of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration.

The Ministry eventually founded a school for the training of its future officials in 1899. In that year, Phraya Wisut Suriyasak (M.R. Pia Malakun), the ambassador in London, submitted to the King a detailed plan for a Civil Service School, which was to be 'administratively self-contained' but closely related to the Ministry of Education.³ Prince Damrong

1. Prince Damrong was referring to the King's desire to establish and to maintain a strictly functionally differentiated central administration.

2. M.84/19: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private, 25 December 1894.

3. D.K. Wyatt, 'The Beginnings of Modern Education in Thailand, 1868-1910' (Cornell Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1966), pp. 367-370. Phraya Wisut Suriyasak did not fully place the Civil Service School under the Ministry of Education because the latter was starved of funds and was weak and unpopular in the Cabinet between 1892 and 1902, pp. 185-441. He did, however, recommend that the first Director of the School should be an official (Nai Sanan Thephasadin na Ayutthaya) from the Ministry, p. 370.

enthusiastically took up the plan but objected to the idea that the School should be closely related to the Ministry of Education and thought that it would be too much to expect it to be immediately able to serve the entire civil service. The Prince offered instead to locate the School within the Ministry of the Interior on the grounds that it would have a better chance to establish itself under such auspices for the Ministry had sufficient funds for its immediate foundation.¹ On receiving the King's approval for this alternative proposition, the Prince set about modifying the plan in order to make it specifically suitable for his purposes. In the modified plan, Prince Damrong envisaged a school which was to admit about fifty students between the ages of fifteen and twenty a year. The Prince planned the course of study to last three years. In the first year, he expected the students to study and improve their hand-writing, writing to dictation, grammar, essay-writing, precis-writing, English, arithmetic, religion, deportment, discipline, and physical education. In the second year, Prince Damrong wanted the students to study the edicts and regulations of the central and provincial

1. ibid., pp. 372-373. Prince Damrong was probably able to appropriate the plan because he was closer to the King than the other ministers and because he had been the first Minister to voice the need for a Civil Service School.

administration. In the same year, the Prince planned to present them as royal pages (mahatlek luang) to the King so that they would know about and be known by the Court and the Cabinet.¹ He probably hoped thereby to gratify the King's desire to know as many executive officials (kharatchakan chan sanyabat) as possible.² In the third year, Prince Damrong wished the students to acquire some practical experience of the provincial administration and planned to send them to be trained by Prince Maruphong at the headquarters of monthon Ayutthaya. After three years, the Prince hoped to be able to present diplomas (prakatsaniyabat) to the graduate students. Prince Damrong emphasized the point that his students were going to become servants in the service of the King (kharatchakan) by naming the school the Royal Pages School or Rongrian Mahatlek Luang.³ The Prince himself took nominal 'charge' but named Phraya Wisut Suriyasak as the first actual 'Director' of the School.⁴

The Royal Pages School admitted its first class of fifty students as soon as it was founded in 1899. At the end of

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1. D.K. Wyatt, op.cit., p. 364, and pp. 423-424.
 2. M.3/3: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, 54/157, 1 July 1895.
 3. D.K. Wyatt, op.cit., p. 424.
 4. ibid., p. 376, footnote 42.

that academic year, seventeen out of the fifty students passed their first year exams.¹ In 1901, seven out of the seventeen students passed their second-year exams.² The Ministry then kept two of them for training in the central administration and the School sent the other five for training in Prince Maruphong's monthon headquarters at Ayutthaya.³ One of these five students, Nai Thong (Chantharangsu), has left an account of his experience in the field. Prince

1. ibid., p. 376, Dr. Wyatt based this figure on a report of the School dated 25 March 1901.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Nithan Borankhadi, Historical Anecdotes (1st edn., Bangkok 1944), p. 223. The Prince recounted that seven out of the original group of fifty students passed their first-year exams. He wrote this account, however, many years after the event and had probably unintentionally confused the chronology.

3. M.191/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 253/7466, 6 October 1903. The Prince wrote to inform the King that he was sending two junior officials who had been students at the Royal Pages School to Chiangmai. On chronological and nominative grounds, I am reasonably sure that one of them was Nai Pao (Charusathian who later became Phraya Phayap Phiriyakit) who was one of the seven students who passed his second-year exams in 1901.

Prince Damrong did not specify the monthon to which the School sent the five students. I follow Dr. Wyatt in saying that the School must have sent them to Ayutthaya in accordance with the Prince's plan of 1899. I do not think that the School sent its students to other monthons until 1904, (M.192/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 62/2055, 24 May 1904.).

Maruphong stationed him for a month as a deputy district officer in Sena Noi to the south-west of Ayutthaya. During his stay in the district, he acquired experience in settling civil disputes, certifying contracts, issuing permits, and registering title deeds and particulars of livestock. He also arrested and sent for trial at the provincial court in Ayutthaya three groups of people, one of which was accused of having indecently assaulted a girl and the other two of having committed murders.¹ Prince Maruphong then recalled him to work in the monthon headquarters for five more months before sending him back to spend the rest of the year at the School in Bangkok. In 1902, he and his six class-mates passed their final examinations and entered the Ministry of the Interior.²

The Ministry rapidly expanded and developed the Royal Pages School between 1899 and 1910. In 1900, the School accepted its second class of a hundred and thirty-two students although it should have admitted only about fifty according

1. Phraya Sunthorathep Kitcharak (Thong Chantharangsu), Raingan Nai Thong, Nai Thong's Reports (2nd ed., Bangkok 1922), pp. 4-32.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., p. 233. All seven students subsequently became senior officials in the Ministry and received the noble rank of Phraya from the King.

to Prince Damrong's original plan.¹ In the following year, the School began to take over from the departments of the central administration the task of training members of the provincial nobility. It admitted, for instance, six young members of the Prince of Chiangmai's family among its third class of students.² In 1902, the School strengthened and widened its syllabus by adding geography and history to its first and second year courses. Two years later, it began to send its third-year men to acquire practical experience of the provincial administration in other monthons besides that of Ayutthaya. It partly did this, on the one hand, because it ceased to have a special relationship with Ayutthaya when the Ministry transferred Prince Maruphong to monthon Prachinburi in 1903. In 1904, it showed its high regards for Prince Maruphong's personal qualities by sending nine students to be trained in the headquarters of his new monthon.⁴ On the other hand, it probably partly wanted its students to establish acquaintances

1. D.K. Wyatt, op.cit., p. 376. I arrive at this figure by subtracting fifty (the number of students admitted in 1899) from a hundred and eighty-two (the number of students who were attending the School in 1900, according to Dr. Wyatt).

2. ibid., p. 424, footnote 86.

3. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena (Siri Thephatsadin na Ayutthaya), Thesaphiban, The Thesaphiban system of provincial administration (2nd edn., Bangkok 1960), p. 156 and p. 159.

4. M.36/13: Sisorarak to Chulalongkorn, 10 January 1904.

with different superintendent commissioners and to gain knowledge of varied conditions in various monthons. In 1904, it therefore sent other students to work in the headquarters of monthons Nakhon Ratchasima and Nakhon Sithammarat.¹ At the same time, the School began to expect its third-year students not only to accumulate practical experience in provincial administration but also to acquire knowledge of a special branch of the service. It therefore sent some of them to be trained as surveyors at monthon Nakhon Ratchasima and as provincial gendarmerie officers at monthons Nakhon Ratchasima and Nakhon Chaisi.² The School at first called its men in the field Royal Pages Students (mahatlek nakrian)³ but it changed to calling them Royal Pages Reporters (mahatlek rai-ngan) in 1906.⁴ This change of nomenclature is significant because it suggests that the Ministry began perhaps to regard the men as not only students but also as reporters who kept the central administration informed of the progress of the implementation of the Thesaphiban system of administration in the provinces.

From 1910 onwards, the Ministry ceased, however, to have

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1. M.192/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 62/2055, 24 May 1904.
 2. M.36/13: Sisorarak to Chulalongkorn, 20 February 1904, and Prince Damrong and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., pp. 162-163.
 3. M.192/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 62/2055, 24 May 1904.
 4. M.194/51: Bisahathep to Chulalongkorn, 98/2847, 18 June 1906.

absolute control over the Royal Pages School. In that year, the government took over the School at the instigation of King Wachirawut. The King made this recommendation because he felt that the School ought to benefit the entire civil service and not just the Ministry of the Interior. The government then changed the School's name to that of the Civil Service School or Rongrian Kharatchakan Phonlaruan and created a proto-university by grouping it with Sirirat Teaching Hospital and the Teachers' Training School.¹ From 1910 to 1915, although the Ministry had to compete with the other ministries for graduates from the Civil Service School, it probably managed to take most of the best graduates because the King allowed it to continue to dominate the School by placing Prince Damrong and Phraya Wisut Suriyasak in charge of the whole of the proto-university. Prince Damrong nevertheless felt that he had to devise yet another method to improve the quality of his officials. In 1914, the Prince begged the King for permission to send to study abroad a few officials who were under twenty-eight years of age and had already served as district officers in the provincial administration.²

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., pp. 226-227.

2. M.202/51: Damrong to Wachirawut, 34/2906, 2 June 1914.

By 1915, the Ministry was probably beginning to solve the problem of the shortage of qualified officials for its central administration. In 1914, the Ministry had, for instance, a hundred and ninety-one executive officials in its central departments. Sixty-three of these officials worked in the six central departments namely the Directorate, Provincial Administration, Legal, Secretariat, Financial, and Registry Departments. A hundred and twenty-eight worked in the five subsidiary departments namely the Forestry, Provincial Revenue, Health, Provincial Gendarmerie, and Criminal Investigation Departments.¹ The Ministry had to recruit and to train ninety-eight men in the six central departments and the Provincial Revenue Department after the Forestry Department had sent its men to be trained at Dehra Dun in British India, the Health Department had recruited its doctors from Sirirat Teaching Hospital, and the Provincial Gendarmerie and Criminal Investigation Departments had trained their officers at their own school in Nakhon Pathon. The Ministry probably recruited the majority of these

1. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 1, 30 Jan. 1915.
 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 2, 5 February 1915.
 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 3, 27 February 1915.
 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 4, 23 March 1915.
 Of the hundred and twenty-eight officials who worked in the subsidiary departments, seven worked in the Forestry Department, thirty-five in the Provincial Revenue Department, twenty-five in the Health Department, and sixty-one officers in the Provincial Gendarmerie and Criminal Investigation Departments.

ninety-eight officials from such traditional sources as Suan Kulap School, the other ministries, and the provincial nobility. It would have, however, strengthened them with a number of graduates from the Royal Pages School who would have been trained for both its central and provincial administration.¹

Between 1899 and 1915, the Ministry of the Interior had vastly expanded its central administration and partially improved the quality of its officials. The Ministry would have been the first to point out, however, that the development of its central administration and the attempts to improve the quality of its officials had constituted only a small part

1. I have so far been unable to discover exactly how many students graduated from the Royal Pages School and the Civil Service School between 1899 and 1915 or how many of them the Ministry of the Interior took from the School during this period. Prince Damrong informed us that seven of the first class of fifty students of 1899 graduated in 1902, (Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., p. 233) and Phraya Ratchasena told us that seven of the fourth class of 1902 graduated in 1905 (Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., p. 160). If the Ministry, while it had absolute control over the School between 1899 and 1910 and while it had close contacts with it between 1910 and 1915, took about seven graduates from it and retained a few of them a year in Bangkok, (as it did in 1902, M.191/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 253/7466, 6 October 1903) it could have filled up to 25% of the positions in the central administration the recruitment for which it was responsible with students from the School in 1914.

of its activities during this period. In 1914, in addition to the hundred and ninety-one executive officials in Bangkok, the Ministry had a thousand and seventy-three more in the provinces. Its superintendent commissioners appointed a further two thousand and fifty-four junior executive officials (kharatchakan chan phanak-ngan) in the provinces.¹ The Ministry had to develop and to expand this provincial administration and to improve the quality of these provincial officials in order to accomplish the larger and more important part of its task namely the implementation of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration.

1. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 1, 30 January 1915. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 2, 5 February 1915. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 3, 27 February 1915. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 4, 23 March 1915.

Of the one thousand and seventy-three executive officials who worked in the provinces, six hundred and forty worked on the staffs of the superintendent commissioners and governors, twenty in the Forestry Department, a hundred and five in the Provincial Revenue Department, eighty-eight in the Health Department, and two hundred and twenty in the Provincial Gendarmerie and Criminal Investigation Departments.

Chapter V

The Implementation of the Thesaphiban system
of Provincial Administration, 1899-1915.

From 1899 to 1915, the Ministry of the Interior attempted to translate the generalized intentions of the Edict concerning district administration of 1897 and the Regulations concerning provincial administration of 1899 into concrete reality. First of all, it had to extend the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration to cover the whole country. It had then to implement, to develop, and to modify the system in order to increase its efficiency and to enable it to meet the ever-increasing demands of the government. It met and had to overcome bureaucratic difficulties and active and passive opposition to the reforms which came from both external and internal sources. The Ministry of the Interior firmly but reasonably handled these problems, achieved a creditable measure of success, and managed thereby to lay the foundation for a centralized system of provincial administration.

The integration of the tributary states
and Outer Provinces.

From 1899 onwards, the Ministry of the Interior gradually integrated the tributary states and outer provinces into the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. The government had partially integrated the administration of some of these states and outer provinces for political, strategic, and financial reasons between 1874 and 1892. It had stationed a permanent commissioner (khaluang pracham huamuang) at Chiangmai to look after the northern tributary states of Chiangmai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae, and Nan, and High Commissioners (Khaluang Yai) at Udonthani and Ubonratchathani to supervise the north-eastern outer provinces. It had transformed the commissioner (khaluang) of the eastern outer provinces at Battambang into the superintendent commissioner (khaluang thesaphiban) of monthon Burapha in 1896.

The Ministry of the Interior was not, however, satisfied with the partial integration of some of the tributary states and outer provinces and wanted to increase its control over them. The Ministry wanted to extend its influence to such states as the Seven Malay Provinces (Khaek Chet Huamuang, namely, Tani (Pattani), Yaring, Yala, Ra-ngae, Nongchik,

Saiburi, and Raman), Kedah, Perlis, Satun (Setul), Kelantan, and Trengganu, which still remained as independent as they had been under the traditional system of provincial administration. It had the same reasons to wish to continue to reform the administration of the tributary states and outer provinces between 1892 and 1915 as it had between 1874 and 1892. In the short term, it felt that it had to integrate them in order to defend the Kingdom's territorial integrity against the persistent pressure from France and Great Britain. It also felt that it had to centralize their administration in order to ensure their loyalty and to tap their resources in man-power and revenue for the reforms which were taking place throughout the Kingdom.

The Ministry of the Interior began to integrate the administration of the southern tributary states between 1892 and 1899. It placed the administration of Kelantan and Trengganu under the supervision of the permanent commissioner of Phuket in 1895, and then began to plan its course of action towards Kedah, Perlis, and Satun.¹ Prince Damrong wrote to ask the King whether,

1. M.12/46: Thipkosa to Chulalongkorn, 1/180, 9 November 1895.

'It is better to extend the reform from the inner to the outer provinces, which means to begin the reform in Songkhla and then to extend it to the Seven Malay Provinces, or to commence it in the outer and then to extend it to the inner provinces, or to inaugurate it everywhere at once with a flourish?'¹

The government favoured Prince Damrong's first course of action, and, in 1896, the Ministry of the Interior sent its first commissioner to the Seven Malay Provinces at the same time as it established monthon Nakhon Sithammarat.² In the following year, it formed Kedah, Perlis, and Satun into monthon Kedah. It transferred Kelantan and Trengganu to the supervision of the superintendent commissioner of Nakhon Sithammarat in 1899.³

The Ministry was, however, at first, unable to integrate the permanent commissionerships of Chiangmai and the Seven Malay Provinces, the High Commissionerships of Udonthani and Ubonratchathani, and monthons Burapha and Kedah into the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. It faced external political obstacles which at the time seemed insurmountable. It was unable to implement full measures of integration in the tributary states and outer provinces because it

1. M.23/47: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private 262/43047, 4 March 1896.

2. M.13/13: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 7 December 1896.

3. M.40/20: Sukhumnawinit to Damrong, Secret 295/9650, 2 March 1900.

was afraid to antagonize France and Great Britain. The Ministry was no doubt conscious of the need to please these Powers upon whom depended Siam's independence and territorial integrity. On the one hand, it probably did not want the French to think that it was using administrative reforms as indirect means to reassert political control over those parts of the north-eastern and eastern tributary states and outer provinces which, lying within the twenty-five kilometre zone on the right bank of the Mekong River, were supposed to be free of Siamese military and fiscal personnel.¹ On the other hand, it did not wish to appear to be trying to forestall British intervention in the southernmost tributary states, for it realized that the government,

'must cultivate and oblige Great Britain, so that she might help to protect (Siam) against France, and must carefully avoid any incident which might provoke her hostility.'²

In 1896, the government's discretion earned a British and French guarantee for Siam's independence. The Ministry did not, however, suddenly become free to implement measures of integration in the tributary states and outer provinces, for the Anglo-French Treaty of the 15th January 1896 had not guaranteed the Kingdom's territorial integrity. The govern-

1. This stipulation formed one of the clauses of the Franco-Siamese Treaty of the 3rd October 1893.

2. M.23/47: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private 262/43047, 4 March 1896.

ment tried to gain some freedom of action in the southern tributary states by promising Great Britain that it would neither cede any territory nor grant any privilege to other nations without her approval in the Secret Anglo-Siamese Convention of the 6th April 1897. It failed, however, to create an equivalent pre-condition for the reform of the administration of the north-eastern and eastern tributary states and outer provinces between 1897 and 1904, for it was unable to persuade the French to refrain from claiming extraterritorial rights without any limitation for their colonial subjects, to stop claiming territories on the right bank of the Mekong River on behalf of the Kingdoms of Luang Prabang and Cambodia, and to return the province of Chanthaburi upon the fulfilment of the terms of the Franco-Siamese Treaty of the 3rd October 1893.¹

The Ministry also faced internal political problems which prohibited the rapid integration of the tributary states and outer provinces into the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. It considered that the population of the tributary states and outer provinces was ethnically different from those in the inner provinces. It had itself emphasized this ethnic difference by calling respectively the northern and north-eastern tributary states and outer provinces the

1. P. Duke, Les Relations entre la France et la Thaïlande au XIX Siècle (Bangkok 1962), pp. 218-241.

North-western Lao Provinces (Huamuang Lao Chiang), the Dry-rice-cultivating Lao Provinces (Huamuang Lao Phuan), and the White Lao Provinces (Huamuang Lao Kao).¹ It had also called the eastern outer provinces the Cambodian Provinces (Huamuang Khamen) before it changed the collective designation to that of monthon Burapha. It knew that the ethnic difference was underlined by cultural differences. The people of the northern and north-eastern tributary states and outer provinces spoke a different Siamese dialect. The Muslim Malays of the southern tributary states not only spoke another language but also practised a different religion. It knew that the tributary states and outer provinces were fiercely jealous of their political independence. Prince Prachak Sinlapakhom, the High Commissioner of Udonthani, informed Prince Damrong that the

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Nithan Borankhadi, Historical Anecdotes (1st edn., Bangkok 1944), p. 280. The Siamese of the Chao Phraya (Maenam) River and the Lao of the Mekong River valleys belonged in fact to the same Tai-Kadai ethnic group. As far as modern ethnography is concerned,

'Lao. This term is apparently of Siamese origin referring to Tai speakers to the north and north-east of the central Chao Phraya plain, distinguished by their preference for glutinous rice; by certain differences in the style of their Buddhist architecture, religious script, and terminology; and by an historical tradition common to the various middle Mekong principalities which persisted up to the intervention of the French and Siamese Tai.'

F.M. Lebar, G.C. Hickey, J.K. Musgrave, Ethnic Groups of Mainland South-east Asia (New Haven 1964), p. 188.

north-easterners were prepared to die in defence of the existing boundaries and government of their provinces.¹ The Ministry realized, furthermore, that the internal and external political problems were closely related. On the one hand, it did not want to impose centralization on the tributary states and outer provinces for fear that it might alienate the provincial nobility and make them 'run to the foreigners'.² On the other hand, Prince Prachak Sinlapakhom, for instance, did not want to reform the administration of Sakon Nakhon and Nakhon Phanom on the right bank of the Mekong River because he wanted to support their nobility who were violently anti-French.³

The Ministry's attempts to integrate the tributary states and outer provinces into the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration were at first confined within this framework of political limitations. This meant that its introduction of measures of integration depended upon its ability either to alter the external political situation or to change the

1. M.16/29: Prachak Sinlapakhom to Damrong, 63/113, 1 November, 1894.

2. M.23/47: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private 262/43047, 4 March 1896.

3. M.16/29: Prachak Sinlapakhom to Damrong, 63/113, 1 November 1894.

internal political situation of each tributary state and outer province. The Ministry realized that the permanent commissioner of Phuket's supervision of Kelantan and Trengganu between 1895 and 1899, the superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Sithammarat's supervision of them between 1899 and 1902, and the formation of Kedah, Perlis, and Satun into monthon Kedah between 1897 and 1905 could only be nominal as long as it did not wish to appear to be trying to forestall British intervention in the southern tributary states. It did not in fact send a superintendent commissioner to monthon Kedah but merely started to call the Sultan (Sultan Abdul Hamid) by that title. It also left intact the existing administration of the state. By 1904, it learnt that the Sultan was 'mentally and emotionally unstable', that the officials were 'interested only in making a living in order to be able to indulge in bodily pleasures, alcohol, and gambling', and that the clerks 'threw away most of the Edicts, laws, and regulations, which had been sent by the Ministry instead of presenting them to the Sultan'.¹ For his part, Sultan Abdul Hamid did not interfere in the administration of either Satun or Perlis in his capacity as the superintendent commissioner of

1. M.14/48: Charunsak Kritsadakon to Sukhumnawinit, Secret, 23 July 1904.

monthon Kedah.¹

The Ministry nevertheless tacitly encouraged the commissioners to initiate measures of integration and centralization at their own discretion in this as in the former period. The commissioners assumed, first of all, the authority to decree byelaws in order to establish such internal order as was deemed necessary to forestall external interference. Phra Sakdaphidet Worarit (Dan Ammaranon), the superintendent commissioner of monthon Burapha, ordered officials to check the papers of travellers and to keep a register of all aliens.² Prince Sanphasitthiprasong, the High Commissioner of Ubonratchathani, outlawed gambling and made the forgery of contracts more difficult by replacing the drawn circle with the finger-print as a mark of signature. The Prince also hoped to gain the upperhand against criminals by offering high rewards for their apprehension.³ Phra Sakdaphidet Worarit encouraged civic-mindedness in monthon Burapha by promising high rewards for the recapture of stray elephants, horses, bullocks, and buffaloes.⁴

1. M.29/48: Duke to Damrong, 6, 20 January 1908.

2. M.14/40: Nai Cha Rong and Prathan Monthian to Chulalongkorn, 1 October 1896.

3. Toem Singhatsathit, Fang Khwa Maenam Khong, The Right Bank of the Mekong River (Bangkok 1956), ii, 83-84 and 123-124.

4. M.14/40: Nai Cha Rong and Prathan Monthian to Chulalongkorn, 1 October 1896.

The commissioners' assumption of authority to enforce law and order was accompanied by various attempts to centralize the government of the tributary states and outer provinces. Phraya Song Suradet (An Bunnag), the permanent commissioner of Chiangmai, greatly increased the central government's influence in the northern tributary states between 1893 and 1899. He managed to station commissioners in the other major northern tributary states of Lamphun, Phrae, and Nan, and in the minor tributary states of Maehongson, Chiangrai, and Chiangkham.¹ He succeeded in introducing the system of 'the royal government and the six ministers' or the khao sanam luang lae sena hok tamnaeng into Lamphun and Phrae.² He also founded a school in Chiangmai the syllabus of which included lessons in the Siamese dialect of the inner provinces, the writing of summaries of documents, the duties of the commissioners and the six ministers, and elementary judicial and financial administration. The graduates of this school became secretaries to central and local government officials.³

1. M.119/25: Damrong to Song Suradet, Secret, 14 March 1898.

2. M.102/25: Song Suradet to Raksena, 11 June 1894, and M.54/39: Ratchawaranukun to Sommot Ammoraphan, 319/9502, 22 June 1896.

3. M.3/39: Raksena to Song Suradet, 130/2073, 27 September 1894.

Prince Prachak Sinlapkhom, the High Commissioner of Udonthani, assimilated the provinces under his jurisdiction to the inner provinces by calling the offices of their administration by the same names in 1894, by dividing them into four classes in 1897, and by giving their nobility similar ranks, titles, and sakdi na marks in the same year.¹ Prince Sanphasitthiprasong, the High Commissioner of Ubonratchathani, assimilated some of the provinces under his jurisdiction to the inner provinces in the same way in 1899.² In 1896, Phraya Sakdaphidet Worarit (Dan Ammaranon) tried to transform the petty nobility of monthon Burapha into district officers and sent the governors of Battambang and Siamriap to study the district administration of monthon Ayutthaya. The governors, on returning to their provinces, divided the countryside into districts, sub-districts, and villages, and transformed the petty nobility into district officers, commune elders, and village elders.³

The commissioners also tried in various ways to centralize the judicial administration of the tributary states and outer provinces. Phraya Song Suradet (An Bunnag), Prince

1. Phraya Prachantaprathet Thani (Ngonkham Phromsakha), Tamnan Muang Sakon Nakhon, The History of Sakon Nakhon (Bangkok 1924), pp. 41-44 and M.57/25: Prachak Sinlapakhom to Damrong, 5 March 1897.

2. Toem Singhatsathit, op.cit., ii, 114-119.

3. M.77/13: Sisahathep to Damrong, 7, 19 April 1899.

Prachak Sinlapakhom, and Prince Sanphasitthiprasong continued to use the judicial administration which had been established in the period before 1892. Prince Sanphasitthiprasong for instance, knowing that the courts of Ubonratchathani were corrupt, enabled the people to appeal to him and to the commissioners and hoped thereby to curtail some of the excesses of venality.¹ Phraya Sukhumnaiwinit (Pan Sukhum) took the first step towards the centralization of the judicial administration of the Seven Malay Provinces when he sent a judicial commissioner from monthon Nakhon Sithammarat to Tani in 1898.² In the following year, he himself settled outstanding cases in the courts of Kelantan in his capacity as the superintendent of monthon Nakhon Sithammarat with responsibilities for Kelantan and Trengganu.³ Phraya Sakdaphidet Worarit (Dan Ammaranon) largely confined himself to the maintenance of law and order and assimilated the judicial administration of monthon Burapha to the inner provinces insofar as he substituted Siamese for Cambodian as the official language of the courts.⁴ The commissioners only managed to send inspectors

1. M.67/25: Sanphasitthiprasong to Damrong, 8/451, 1 July 1900.

2. M.44/20: Sukhumnaiwinit to Damrong, 13/40, 10 April 1898.

3. M.40/20: Sukhumnaiwinit to Damrong, Secret 1242, 14 April 1900.

4. M.14/40: Nai Uha Rong and Prathan Monthian to Chulalongkorn, 1 October 1896.

to Kedah and Trengganu. Phraya Sukhumnaiwinit learnt that the Kedah judges theoretically used Siamese, British, and Malay laws but 'the majority of them actually used the law in their hearts'.¹

The commissioners not only attempted to centralize the judicial but also the financial administration of the tributary states and outer provinces. Phraya Sisahathep (Seng Wirayasiri), the Ministry of the Interior's Permanent Under-Secretary, helped Phraya Sakdaphidet Worarit (Dan Ammaranon) to introduce the commutation tax into monthon Burapha in 1899. The government then took two-thirds of the revenue from this tax. In 1900, Phraya Sakdaphidet Worarit himself used the death of the governor of Siamriap as an opportunity to appropriate two-thirds of the revenue from every tax in the province.² He also took the initiative to take over the entire financial administration of the provinces of Sisophon and Phanomsok at about the same time.³ A little earlier, Phra Seniphithak introduced export and import taxes into the Seven Malay Provinces.⁴ The government kept 87.5% of the revenue

1. M.14/48: Charunsak Kritsadakon to Sukhumnaiwinit, Secret, 23 July 1904.

2. M.51/20: Damrong to Sommot Ammoraphan, 189/1834, 14 June 1900.

3. M.30/40: Sisahathep to Damrong, 7 September 1905.

4. M.37/49: Sisahathep to Damrong, 14 December 1901.

from these taxes on the grounds that the commissioner's officials directly administered their collection. It found, however, that the Malay nobility were extremely dissatisfied with their 12.5% share of the proceeds and had to placate them by raising their share to 20% in 1900.¹

In the meantime, Phraya Song Suradet (An Bunnag) tried to extinguish the independent financial administration of the northern tributary states. Between 1893 and 1898, Phraya Song Suradet grew more and more frustrated with the financial administration which had been established in the period before 1892. In 1894, he discovered, for instance, that the government had not received its share of Lampang's timber tax for ten years.² In other words, the Prince of Lampang had completely ignored the pledge that the Principality would give the government 31.25% of the tax which he had given to Prince Phichit Prichakon in 1884.³ He also found that the financial administration of the system of 'the royal government and the six ministers' did not work in Chiangmai and Lampang. The Princes of Chiangmai and Lampang had introduced functional

1. M.3/47: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private 252/6635, 10 December 1900.

2. M.1/57: Raksena to Song Suradet, 5, 22 December 1894.

3. M.1/71: Phichit Prichakon to Chulalongkorn, 14 May 1884.

differentiation but had failed to unite their ministers into an administration. In 1893, the ministers of agriculture of these two principalities refused to hand over the revenue from the taxes which their ministries had collected to the ministries of finance.¹ Three years later, Chiangmai's minister of finance reversed the position by refusing to provide money for the expenditure of the other ministries.² In 1898, Phraya Song Suradet used the death of the Prince as a pretext to take over the financial administration of Chiangmai. The permanent commissioner's officials then proceeded to auction the tax farms and to collect the taxes.³

Phraya Song Suradet's seizure of the Principality of Chiangmai's financial administration precipitated a crisis in the relationship between the government and the northern tributary states. The princes of Chiangmai protested to the King that they were being treated 'only as district officers village elders and not as princes of a tributary state in accordance with their ranks and titles'.⁴ The King placated

1. M.119/25: Song Suradet to Damrong, Secret, 29 November 1893.

2. M.119/25: Song Suradet to Damrong, Secret 177/1774, 2 July 1896.

3. M.16/19: The Upparat of Chiangmai to Chulalongkorn, 1/35, 27 July 1899.

4. ibid.

them by recalling Phraya Song Suradet to Bangkok and by sending a new commissioner. He realized, however, that such an action only removed the immediate cause of discontent but did not in any way provide a permanent solution to the problem of the relationship between the government and the northern tributary states. In August of 1899, he discussed with Prince Damrong the necessity for a new

'...general policy towards the Lao tributary states.

Item 1. I want to see co-operation as opposed to division between the commissioner's and the princes' officials...I want them to form a council similar to those by which the British administer their Malay states. If the Lao are not segregated and are made to co-operate, and if there are consultations and decisions taken in council, then they will not have grounds to complain of a lack of participation in the work of the government. They will also be unable to reverse the decisions taken in council. Furthermore, if they are over-ruled time and again when matters on which decisions cannot be reached are referred to Bangkok, then they will learn not to challenge us.

Item 2. The question of income is important, for the Lao should not be made to feel destitute. I feel that junior officials especially should be given a handsome salary so that they will turn their loyalty towards the central government. Do not make them feel that their work will not be rewarded because they are Lao. If all the junior officials are loyal then the senior officials cannot become all that powerful. Never allow them to consult with each other.'

The King concluded by warning that any transformation of the relationship between the government and the northern tributary states 'needs much tact on the part of the commissioner'.¹

1. M.16/39: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, 53/539, 26 August, 1899.

The Ministry of the Interior itself considered that the time was ripe to initiate a new phase in the integration of the tributary states and outer provinces into the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. From 1899 onwards, it felt that it was beginning to be able to influence the political situation within some of the tributary states and outer provinces. It had gained the upper hand in Chiangmai not so much because Phraya Song Suradet had seized the Principality's financial administration in 1898, but because the princes were heavily indebted to the King, from whom they have had to borrow money to pay fines incurred as a result of their maladministration of forest concessions.¹ In a similar way, it won an advantageous position in Kedah, which slowly went bankrupt because the local nobility continually spent most of the revenue in advance of its collection.² As far as the external political situation was concerned, it presumably hoped that neither Great Britain nor France would object to the further integration of some of the southern, north-eastern, and northern tributary states and outer provinces as long as it did not take over Kelantan

1. M.89/19: Ratchawaranukun to Sommot Ammoraphan, 488/14903, 5 August 1896.

2. M.14/48: Charunsak Kritsadakon to Sukhumnaiwinit, Secret, 23 July 1904.

and Trengganu or contravened the terms of the Franco-Siamese Treaty of the 3rd October 1893 whereby the territories lying within the twenty-five kilometre zone of the right bank of the Mekong River were supposed to be free of Siamese military and fiscal personnel.

In these circumstances, the Ministry inaugurated the new phase of integration by changing the status and collective designations of some of the tributary states and outer provinces. It realized that the status and the collective designations of the tributary states and outer provinces were inherently divisive from both the external and internal political points of view. It knew that Great Britain and France could lay claims to them on the grounds that they were only tributaries of Siam and that their population were of different ethnic groups.¹ It also realized that their rulers could exploit these anomalies in order to remain as independent as they had been in the traditional system of provincial administration.² For these reasons, it abolished the tributes (khruang ratchabannakan and ngoen suai) from the northern and north-eastern tributary states and outer provinces in 1899.

1. A. Pavie, Mission Pavie, Indochine 1879-1895, Geographie et Voyages, i, (Paris 1901), 211, and A. Pavie, op.cit., ii, (Paris 1906), 72 and 90.

2. M.16/29: Prachak Sinlapakhom to Damrong, 63/113, 1 November 1894.

At the same time, it declared that it no longer recognized the ethnic differences between the inner provinces and the northern and north-eastern tributary states and outer provinces which had been written into their collective designations. It abandoned its ethnic concept of the Lao, and respectively changed the names of the North-western Lao Provinces, the Dry-rice-cultivating Lao Provinces, and the White Lao Provinces to the North-western monthon (monthon fai tawan-tok Chiang Nua), monthon Udon, and monthon Isan.¹

In the following year, it changed the name of the North-western monthon to that of monthon Phayap. In 1901, it ignored the ethnic and cultural differences between the inner provinces and the Seven Malay Provinces and changed their collective designation to that of the Area of the Seven

1. Toem Singhatsathit, op.cit., ii, 114-119. The names were changed in July 1899.

Provinces (Boriwan Chet Huamuang).¹

The Ministry then formulated new regulations for the government of the tributary states and outer provinces the status and collective designation of which had been changed in 1899. It issued the Regulations concerning the administration of the North-western monthon in 1900, the Regulations concerning the division of monthons Isan and Udon into administrative areas, and the Regulations concerning the administration of the Area of the Seven Provinces in 1901.² It hoped thereby to strengthen its control over every level, and sphere of the administration of these tributary states and outer provinces. First of all, it promoted the permanent

1. I have so far been unable to find documents which specifically substantiate my assertions concerning the motivation for the changing of the status and collective designations of the northern and north-eastern tributary states and outer provinces. Prince Damrong made an inexplicit reference to the event many years later, when he wrote that the King, 'said that the government held the states on the frontier...to be 'Lao Provinces' and called the people, who were really of the 'Thai race', Lao, because it traditionally favoured the 'Empire' in which there were dependent states of different races and languages as a system of administration. That system of administration had, however, become obsolete, and would have harmed the Kingdom if it had been maintained. The King therefore initiated the reform of the system, changed it to that of a unified Thai 'Kingdom', abolished the tradition according to which the tributary states presented him with Gold and Silver Trees, changed the names..., and abolished the nomenclature of Lao for the people of those three monthons.'

Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., p. 280.

2. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuanyut, Tamra Pokkhrong, A text-book on administration, i (2nd edn., Bangkok 1905), 234-274, 297-298, and 279-293.

commissioner of the provinces in the Area of the Seven Provinces into High Commissioners. It laid down the rule that the High Commissioner of the North-western monthon, who was to reside in Chiangmai, must visit Lamphun once a month, Lampang twice a year, and Phrae and Nan once a year. The High Commissioner of the Area of the Seven Provinces, who was to reside in Tani, must visit the other six provinces twice a year. It realized that the High Commissioner and his deputy in Chiangmai could not possibly superintend all the dependencies of the northern states, and therefore divided them into three administrative areas (boriwen) which were placed under area commissioners (khaluang boriwen).¹ For the same reason, it grouped the north-eastern provinces into ten administrative areas and gave five each to monthons Udon and Isan.²

The Ministry hoped to use the regulations to increase its control over the government of the former tributary

1. The three administrative areas of the North-western monthon were Northern Chiangmai, Western Chiangmai, and Northern Nan.

2. The five administrative areas of monthon Udon were Mak Khaeng, Phachi, That Phanom, Sakon Nakhon, and Namhuang.

The five administrative areas of monthon Isan were Ubon-ratchathani, Bassac, Khukhan, Surin, and Roi-et.

See Appendix VI for dependencies and provinces in these administrative areas, p. 417.

states. It introduced changes into the system of 'the royal government and the six ministers' in order to gain absolute domination in all but name of the northern states. It gave more power to the High Commissioner than it did to the permanent commissioners and thereby enabled him to assume an even stronger position vis-a-vis the princes. It lessened the Princes' patronage of ennoblement and allowed them to give the ranks of mun, khun, luang, and phraya only with the concurrence of the High Commissioner. It suppressed the Princes' patronage of offices and took over the appointment of the six ministers. It instructed the High Commissioner to attend the councils of the states four times a month and gave him the power to veto any decision taken by the Princes and their ministers. It claimed that it was not going to interfere in the dependencies in the administrative areas, but nevertheless empowered the area commissioners not only to veto any decision taken by their administration but also to arrest any unco-operative member of the local nobility. It created a similar system of government for the Malay provinces in the Area of the Seven Provinces. It founded in each province a provincial headquarters (kongbanchakan muang), which it aimed to dominate by appointing three of the four members, the deputy governor, the judge, and the revenue officer. It could then afford to acknowledge the Malay

governor as the head of the provincial headquarters. Furthermore, it planned to introduce into the North-western monthon and the Area of the Seven Provinces the district, sub-district, and village administration as laid down in the Edict concerning the district administration of 1897. It made concessions to regional feelings in this respect insofar as it allowed the northern states to call the officials at this level of the administration by their local names.¹

The Ministry also hoped to strengthen its control over the judicial administration of the former tributary states. It proposed to send a judicial commissioner (khaluang yuttitham) to assist the High Commissioner of the North-western monthon. It lessened the Princes' legislative and judicial powers, for it allowed them to legislate only with the concurrence of the High Commissioner and the judicial commissioner, and to fine up to one hundred baht, to imprison up to three months, or to inflict both forms of punishment. It must have been fully conscious of the fact that it was drastically reducing the Princes' legislative and judicial competence, for it had given greater power than that to its provincial judges, who were able to fine up to 5000 baht and

1. The district officer, commune elder, and village elder in the North-western monthon were known respectively as khwaeng, khwaen, and kae ban.

to order scourging and imprisonment according to the amounts specified by the law.¹ Furthermore, it issued a subsidiary regulation which enabled the High Commissioner and the judicial commissioner to legislate and to fine up to two hundred baht, to imprison up to six months, or to inflict both forms of punishment.² It similarly lessened the legislative and judicial competence of the Malay governors in the Area of the Seven Provinces. It stipulated that the governor could legislate only in concurrence with the High Commissioner and the provincial headquarters.

Furthermore, the Ministry hoped to use the regulations and subsidiary edicts to increase its control over the financial administration of the former tributary states and outer provinces. It wanted as usual to increase the revenue and to weaken the provincial nobility at the same time. It announced that it was going to send a revenue commissioner (khaluang sanphakon) to take over the fiscal administration of the states in the North-western monthon. At the same time, it sapped the prestige and power of the northern **royalty** and nobility by abolishing their right to demand official and personal service from the common people (phrai), and substi-

1. 'Phrathammanun san huamuang', 'The Constitution for the provincial courts', RKB, xii (1895), 392-399.

2. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuanyut, op.cit., 275-276.

tuted a standard commutation tax of four baht per year.¹ It also undermined their economic position by halving the value of their debt-slaves and by declaring that no-one born in and after 1897 or aged over sixty could become a slave.² It intended to benefit in both the short and the long terms from these reforms, for it made the revenue commissioner responsible for the collection of the commutation tax from both the common people and those slaves who would have taken advantage of the reduction of their debt and bought their way out of slavery. It also increased its share of the timber tax from 25% to 50% presumably on the grounds that it was not only doing all the work but also saving the princes from being fined for maladministration of the forest concessions.³ It proposed to send a financial commissioner (khaluang khlang) to audit the revenue and expenditure of the northern states. In the south, it empowered the revenue officers to take over the fiscal administration of the Malay provinces in the Area of the Seven Provinces. It planned to compensate the Malay nobility for the loss of their financial independence by

1. ibid., iii (Bangkok 1906), 1872-1876.

2. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuayut, op.cit., ii, (Bangkok 1905), 947-954.

3. M.1/57: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 264/7508, 12 July 1901.

offering them fixed but adequate pensions.¹ Finally, it introduced compulsory animal registration into the whole country including the former tributary states and outer provinces. It empowered officers to inflict those who disobeyed this injunction with fines up to twenty baht or with imprisonment up to one month or with both forms of punishment.²

The Ministry of the Interior initiated the new phase of the integration of the former tributary states and outer provinces with little waste of time. It did not wait to obtain the Cabinet's approval or to gazette an announcement before it made the permanent commissioner of Chiangmai, Phraya Narissara-ratchakit (Sai Chotikasathian), the first High Commissioner of the north-western monthon, and sent its Permanent Under-Secretary, Phraya Sisahathep (Seng Wirayasiri) to help him to implement the reforms of the administration of the northern states in January of 1900.³ Phraya Sisahathep himself wasted no time, for he reorganized the administration of Chiangmai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae, and Nan within three

1. The government's compensation was worth marginally more than the income which the Malay nobility had previously made from their financial administration. M.37/49: Sisahathep to Damrong, 14 December 1901.

2. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuanyut, op.cit., i, 305-363.

3. The Regulation concerning the administration of the north-western monthon was not approved by the cabinet until the 30th June and was not gazetted until the 22nd July 1900. RKB, xvii (1900), 177-194.

months of his arrival in the north.¹ He used the same method to reform the administration of each state. On his arrival in Lamphun, for instance, he summoned the commissioner, the deputy commissioner, the Prince, and the six ministers to a meeting at which he informed them of their new functions and limitations of their power. He then proceeded to divide Lamphun into districts, sub-districts, and villages.² The Ministry did not send a high-ranking official to the northeast but left Prince Watthana and Prince Sanphasitthiprasong to establish the administrative areas in monthons Udon and Isan.³ It did, however, send a high-ranking official, Phraya Sakseni (Na Bunnag), as the first High Commissioner to the Malay Provinces in the Area of the Seven Provinces as soon as it had gazetted the Regulations concerning the administration of the Area of the Seven Provinces in December of 1901.⁴

In 1902, however, the Ministry encountered violent opposition to the implementation of its new phase of the integration of the former tributary states and outer provinces.

1. M.42/20: Sisahathep to Damrong, 28/1370, 4 April 1900.

2. M.42/20: Damrong to Sommot Ammoraphan, 13/160, 9 April 1900.

3. I have been able to find only one reference to the actual establishment of an administrative area, which was that of Khukhan in monthon Isan in 1902. M.31/25: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 360/12515, 22 March 1902.

4. M.1/49 (ko.) Bunch 1: Damrong to Sommot Ammoraphan, 898/9307, 26 December 1901.

The motivation, the form, and the degree of violence of the opposition varied from one area of the country to another. Phraya Sakseni, the High Commissioner of the Area of the Seven Provinces, faced opposition in the form of the passive resistance of the governors of Tani, Ra-ngae, and Saiburi. The governor of Saiburi opposed the Regulations concerning the administration of the Area of the Seven Provinces on the grounds that the government was going to dominate the province by appointing only Siamese as deputy governor, judge, revenue officer, and district officers.¹ The governor of Tani refused to allow the revenue officer to take over the financial administration of his province.² He presumably felt that the government had not adequately compensated him for taking over his financial administration. He had previously been in favour of a two-thirds share which would automatically increase with the rise of the revenue and against a fixed pension.³

The Ministry met more than passive resistance to the reforms in monthons Udon and Isan. Prince Watthana and Prince Sanphasitthiprasong found themselves faced with a mass

1. M.15/49: Sakseni to Damrong, Telegram 10, 11 February 1902.

2. M.1/49 (ko.) Bunch 1: Sakseni to Damrong, Telegram 1, 6 February 1902.

3. M.37/49: Sisahathep to Damrong, 14 December 1901.

up-rising in February of 1902.¹ They encountered at first a messianic movement, the leaders of which, known as Holy Men or Phu Mi Bun, predicted that the end of the world was near, that gold and silver would turn to pebbles and stones, and that a Royal Lord of the Holy Law (Thao Thammikkarat) would then appear to transform pebbles and stones into silver and gold. Prince Sanphasitthiprasong ordered the arrest of Holy Men, when he discovered that they were taking money, silver, and gold in exchange for blessing the people for protection against the effects of doomsday. He then found that the Holy Men rallied the people not only to protect themselves but also to attack the authorities.² The Holy Men's rebellion was not, however, just a messianic movement, for the leaders did express opposition to the reforms on their own and on behalf of the inarticulate masses. Prince Sanphasitthiprasong later realized that some of the Holy Men were the provincial 'petty nobility and those people who had no power but wished to make a living in the old ways'.³ In other words, the provincial petty nobility resented the

1. M.9/1: Sanphasitthiprasong to Damrong, Telegram 30, 26 February 1902, and M.9/1: Watthana to Damrong, Telegram 61, 2 March 1902.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., pp. 307-309.

3. M.9/4: Sanphasitthiprasong to Damrong, 29/421, 11 July 1903.

government's formation of large administrative units and steady reduction of local governmental, judicial, and financial independence. Phra Yanrakkhit (Chan), the head abbot of monthon Isan, later explained to the Prince that the people had spontaneously supported the Holy Men, because they resented the corruption in the administration. He said that the officials often did not give receipts for payment of commutation tax and did not recognize the validity of animal registration papers in order to be able to fine and to imprison the people for not complying with the regulations.¹ The rebellion quickly spread in February and March, and bands of rebels appeared to attack the authorities throughout the northeast. One such band grew so strong that it attacked, looted, and burnt the provincial town of Khemarat on the right bank of the Mekong River.²

The Ministry faced a less universal but nonetheless equally dangerous opposition to the reforms in the north. It encountered at first a rising of the Shans against the administration of Phrae in July of 1902. It had reasons to suspect, however, that the rising was associated with an opposition to the reforms, for it discovered that the Shans

1. M.32/25: Yanrakkhit to Sanphasitthiprasong, Private, 29 August 1902.

2. M.9/1: Sanphasitthiprasong to Damrong, Telegram 54, 28 March 1902.

massacred Siamese officials but spared the princes, the nobility, and the local inhabitants.¹ Its suspicions were confirmed when it found out that the Prince of Phrae himself, several of the other princes and nobility, and many of the local inhabitants had either directly or indirectly aided and abetted the Shans.² It was later able to gather information concerning the grievances of the people of Phrae. The Shans rose against the government because they resented the racial discrimination which made it difficult and often impossible for them to obtain travelling papers, to claim, to buy, and to rent land.³ The Prince of Phrae and his associates encouraged the Shans in the hope that if the rising was successful, the government would be forced to revoke the reforms and to restore the state's governmental, judicial, and financial independence.⁴ The people supported the Shans because they hated the officials who collected commutation tax but still demanded service in spite of the

1. M.111/13: The governor of Phichai to Damrong, 18 September 1902.

2. M.111/13: Fenger to Surasak Montri, 28 August 1902.

3. M.111/13: Thomas to Surasak Montri, 27 August 1902.

4. Krom Sinlapakon, Prap Ngio ton thi song, The suppression of the Shans part 2, (Prachum Phongswadan, lxxviii, 1962), 93-94.

Edict concerning the substitution of service by commutation tax of 1900.¹

The government and the Ministry of the Interior took swift action to suppress the opposition to the reforms. The Ministry of the Interior sent its Permanent Under-Secretary, Phraya Sisahathep (Seng Wirayasiri), and the superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Sithammarat, Phraya Sukhumnainiwinit (Pan Sukhum), to deal with the recalcitrant governors of the Malay provinces in the Area of the Seven Provinces. It used the well-tried method of giving extra authority to its envoys by sending them in a gun-boat. Phraya Sisahathep had no difficulty in arresting the governor of Tani and in sending him into exile in Phitsanulok.² He then sent Phraya Sukhumnainiwinit to arrest the governor of Ra-ngae and to send him into exile in Songkhla.³ He himself captured Luang Rayaphakdi, the governor of Raman's son who had murdered a man and resisted arrest and sent him to prison in Bangkok.⁴

1. ibid., 139-140. Narissara-ratchakit to Udomphong Phensawat, Telegram 96, 27 September 1902.

2. M.1/49 (ko.) Bunch 1: Sisahathep to Damrong, 2 March 1902.

3. M.7/49: Sukhumnainiwinit to Mahatthai, Telegram 15, 17 March 1902.

4. M.6/49: Sisahathep to Chulalongkorn, Private 50/455, 11 April 1902.

The government used drastic means to suppress the rebellions in the north-east and the north. It sent regular troops to reinforce the local levies and provincial gendarmes and put both areas under martial law.¹ In April of 1902, a government force, which had been stiffened with a battery of howitzers, dispersed the largest of the Holy Men's bands with 'whiffs of grapeshot' at a village north-east of Ubon-ratchathani.² In August of the same year, provincial gendarmes and regular troops successfully defended Lampang against a Shan attack, and provincial gendarmes and levies of Phichai, Sukhothai, and Sawankhalok drove the Shans out of Phrae.³ These actions proved salutary, for the people stopped supporting the Holy Men and the Shans and the authorities were able to apprehend them without too much difficulty. Prince Sanphasitthiprasong had a number of Holy Men executed and sentenced others to varying terms of imprisonment.⁴ The authorities failed to capture many Shans but had the gratification of obtaining extra confirmation of local collusion when two members of the nobility of Phrae committed suicide, and the Prince of Phrae himself fled to Luang Prabang soon

1. M.9/1: Sanphasitthiprasong to Damrong, Telegram 81, 7 May 1902, and M.111/13: The governor of Phichai to Damrong, 18 September 1902.

2. M.9/1: Sanphasitthiprasong to Damrong, Telegram 6, 5 April 1902.

3. M.113/13: Senarat to Mahatthai no dates.

4. Toem Singhatsathit, op.cit., ii, 239-240.

after the failure of the rising.¹

The government's victory over the opposition appeared quite complete. In the south, the Ministry of the Interior made the Malay nobility comply with the Regulations concerning the administration of the Area of the Seven Provinces after the exile of the governors of Tani and Ra-ngae and the imprisonment of Luang Rayaphakdi of Raman.² In the north, it replaced Phraya Narissara-ratchakit (Sai Chotikasathian) by the ruthlessly efficient Phraya Surasi Wisitsak (Choei Kanlayanamit), who, under the rank and title of Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat, had so successfully reorganized the administration of monthon Phitsanulok. It abolished Phrae's status as a principality after the flight of the Prince of Phrae to Luang Prabang.³ Furthermore, it completely centralized every sphere and level of Phrae's administration. It sent the governor of Phichai, Phraya Sisuriratchawaranuwat (Pho Netipho), to be the first governor of Phrae. It abolished the system of 'the royal government and the six

1. M.117/13: Robyns to Surasak Montri, 30 September 1902, and Krom Sinlapakon, Prap Ngio ton thi nung, The suppression of the Shans part 1, (Prachum Phongswadan, lxxv, 1959), 34-36. Surasak Montri to Damrong, Telegram 133, 7 October 1902, and Krom Sinlapakon, Prap Ngio ton thi song, The suppression of the Shans part 2, op.cit., 101-103. Damrong, Telegram 99, 25 September 1902.

2. M.1/49 (kho.) Bunch 2: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 25/285, 6 April 1902, and M.6/49: Sisahathep to Chulalongkorn, 55/48 3 13 April 1902.

3. Krom Sinlapakon, op.cit., pp. 107-108.

ministers', reformed the administration after the model of the inner provinces, and sent officials to fill all the positions. It so thoroughly centralized Phrae's administration that it even sent a janitor to look after the provincial headquarters.¹

The government's confidence was, however, badly shaken by the opposition it encountered in 1902. It knew that its military victory could not overcome the resentment some people felt towards the reduction of regional independence. Prince Sanphasitthiprasong, for instance, told Prince Damrong that 'there were several groups of unknown clever men who were quietly continuing to foment sedition' in the north-east.² In November of that year, the King expressed his anxiety concerning the centralization of the former tributary states and outer provinces to Prince Damrong.

'...We have rather perverted the administration of the Lao provinces and the Seven Malay Provinces from its true state. It can also be said that we have imported but have misused a foreign model of administration...

When the British use this model of administration, they go to advise and to supervise rulers whom they treat as the owners of the provinces...We, on the other hand, treat the provinces as ours, which is not true, for the Malays and the Lao consider that

1. M.85/19: Sisahathep to Sommot Ammoraphan, 2442/10501, 30 December 1902.

2. M.9/4: Sanphasitthiprasong to Damrong, 29/421, 11 July 1903.

'the provinces belong to them. When we say that we are going to trust them, we do not really do so, but send commissioners and deputy commissioners to supervise them. The commissioners and deputy commissioners are then empowered only either to manipulate them as puppets or, if that is not possible, to spy on them and to pass on their secrets. We cannot, however, really protect ourselves against anything in this way. I do not think that an administration, which is so full of deviousness, can result in our mutual trust and peace of mind.'

The King ended his letter on a pessimistic note by saying that he was 'sorry not to have any solution (for this problem) at the moment'.¹

The Ministry of the Interior had itself been shaken by the opposition and had decided to relax the pace of the integration of the former tributary states and outer provinces. In 1902, it abandoned the further centralization of the Cambodian provinces, when it appointed Phraya Khathathon Thoranin (Chum Aphaiwong), the governor of Battambang, as the second superintendent commissioner of monthon Burapha.² It thereby handed those provinces back to a member of the local nobility who had strong vested interests in the maintenance of the existing administration. The Ministry also decided to relax the rigid implementation of the regulations of 1900 and

1. M.31/49: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, Private 192/1610, 21 November 1902.

2. M.25/40: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, 204/1323, 22 January 1902.

1901 as soon as it had overcome overt opposition to them in 1902. In 1903 and 1904, it tried hard to regain the loyalty of the leaders and of the people of the former tributary states and outer provinces. In the north, it recalled the commissioner of Lampang and left only the deputy commissioner to assist the Prince in the administration of the Principality.¹ It also reduced its share of the timber tax of Nan from 50% to 25%, which had been the amount it had taken from the Principality before the reforms of 1900.² In the north-east, Prince Damrong himself told Prince Watthana 'to be kind to the incumbent governors and officials' of monthon Udon. He added that the Prince,

'should somehow enable them to obtain adequate incomes so that they would not be needy and restless; 2, put down banditry so that the countryside would be peaceful; 3, aid and comfort the people, who have suffered much from the Holy Men's affair, so that they would be able to settle down again.'³

The Ministry then recalled its supervisory commissioner (khaluang kamkap ratchakan) from Nongkhai and handed the province back to its semi-hereditary governor even though it

1. M.56/19: Damrong to Sommot, 617/3130, 21 June 1904.

2. M.1/57: Sisahathep to Chulalongkorn, 137/5342, 18 August 1904.

3. M.36/25: Damrong to Watthana, Telegram Secret 48/11454, 22 January 1903.

knew him to be 'an alcoholic, an opium addict, a covetous and quarrelsome man'.¹ It also tried to promote economic development in the north-east from 1904 onwards by introducing scientific methods of sericulture and by fostering the local silk-weaving industry.² In the south, it allowed the governor of Ra-ngae to go back to his province after it had made him promise to comply with the Regulations of 1901.³ It also allowed the governor of Tani to go back to his province after it had made him promise not to participate in any political activity and to abide by the laws.⁴ Furthermore, it presumably hoped to reconcile all the Malay governors by replacing its High Commissioner, Phraya Sakseni (Na Bunnag) by a new man, Phraya Mahiban Borirak (Sawat Phumirat).⁵

The Ministry did not, however, abandon the desire to

1. M.36/25: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 558/12686, 17 February 1903.

2. Krasuang Krasat, Prawat Krasuang Krasat, The history of the Ministry of Agriculture (Bangkok 1957), pp. 70-73.

3. M.20/49: Phuphathibodi to Sukhumnawinit, 7 February 1903, and M.20/49: Sisahathep to Sommot, 69/500, 11 April 1903.

4. M.3/49: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 397/13112, 5 March 1904.

5. M.192/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 179/6495, 28 September 1904.

centralize the tributary states, and it was using new methods to impose greater control over Kelantan even when it had to relax the pace of centralization in other areas of the country. In the middle of the Holy Men's rebellion in the north-east, the government signed the Secret Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1902, whereby the Ministry was enabled to send Advisers to Kelantan and Trengganu as long as they were persons agreeable to the British government.¹ In December of the same year, it signed an Agreement with Kelantan whereby it was enabled to send an Adviser, a Deputy Adviser, and other officials as long as they confined themselves to foreign relations and communications, took only 10% of the revenue, did not interfere in the internal administration, and did not 'erase' the traditional authority of the Sultan.² It sent an Englishman, W.A. Graham, as its Adviser to Kelantan in July of 1903.³ In the course of the following six years, it sent five other Englishmen, a Deputy Adviser, a Secretary, a Superintendent of Lands, a Superintendent of Police, and a Public Works Officer, and two Siamese, a judge and a medical

1. J. Kennedy, A History of Malaya: A.D. 1400-1959 (London 1962), p. 244.

2. M.98/46: An agreement between the Sultan of Kelantan and the government of Siam, 4 December 1902.

3. M.32/46: Graham to Damrong I/B, 31 July 1903.

officer, to assist the Adviser.¹ Graham and his colleagues did not, however, confine themselves only to foreign relations and communications, for they did interfere in Kelantan's administration, and initiated the first stages of the integration of the state. They introduced and began to collect, for instance, export, import, and kerosene oil taxes. They won the co-operation of the Sultan and the other members of Kelantan's nobility by helping them to make the rice tax more productive and by giving them 90% of the increasing revenue. In this way, they persuaded them to appoint commune and village elders and to abolish such traditional forms of punishment as mutilation for robbery.² The Ministry did not, however, manage to enter into an agreement which would have enabled it to send an Adviser to Trengganu.³

At the same time, the Ministry also used the Adviser system as a means of increasing its control over Kedah and Perlis. It did not sign secret treaties with Great Britain when it sent Advisers to Kedah and Perlis. It was in a strong position towards Kedah and Perlis, because these two

1. W.A. Graham, Report of the State of Kelantan for the period 15th February 1907 to 4th February 1908 (Bangkok 1909) p. 1-2.

2. W.A. Graham, op.cit., pp. 3-4, and M.69/46: General Report of Affairs in the State of Kelantan for the year August 1903 to August 1904, by W.A. Graham.

3. M.14/48: Charunsak Kritsadakon to Sukhumnawinit, Secret, 23 July 1904.

states were in a condition of near bankruptcy.¹ In 1905, it gave them loans in order to make them solvent on the condition that they must then accept Advisers. It sent two Englishmen, C.G. Hart and A. Duke, as the respective Advisers to Kedah and Perlis.² Since they were in a strong position, Hart and Duke were able to interfere more in Kedah's and Perlis' administration than Graham was able to do in Kelantan. They founded State Legislative Councils, the members of which included the Adviser, the Deputy Adviser, the Sultan, and two other members of the local nobility. It was, however, the government, and not the Malay members in the majority, which had the right to initiate legislation in the State Councils.³ Hart and Duke also told the Sultans of Kedah and Perlis to appoint district officers and commune elders. Furthermore, they strictly supervised the financial administration of both states, and saved any surplus from the revenue for the payment of outstanding debts and the interests on the government's loans.⁴ Hart went so far as to reduce the

1. M.14/48: Charunsak Kritsadakon to Sukhumnawinit, Secret, 23 July 1904.

2. M.2/13: Sisahathep and Westengard to Chulalongkorn, 255/33946, 24 December 1906, and M.29/48: Duke to Damrong, 6, 20 January 1908.

3. M.40/48: Damrong to Sommot, 451/1945, 26 May 1906.

4. M.29/48: Duke to Damrong, 6, 20 January 1908.

incomes of the Sultan and the other officials in order to increase the surplus from Kedah's revenue.¹

While Graham, Hart, and Duke were beginning to increase the government's control over Kelantan, Kedah, and Perlis, the government felt that it could embark on the final centralization of the former tributary states and outer provinces in monthons Phayap, Udon, Isan, and the Area of the Seven Provinces.² It could now impose its will on these former tributary states and outer provinces, because it knew that it had overawed them by its determined and swift suppression of both the active and passive opposition to the reforms in 1901 and 1902.³ It could also feel free to centralize the former outer provinces in monthons Udon and Isan, for it had at last established friendly relations with France. In the Franco-Siamese Convention of the 13th February 1904 and the Treaty of the 23rd March 1907, the French agreed to revoke the clause in the Treaty of 1893 whereby the Siamese were not allowed to have military and fiscal personnel in the area lying within the twenty-five kilometre zone on the right bank

1. M.16/48: A Report of the Financial Adviser (W.J.F. Williamson) on the Financial Position of Kedah in 1905.

2. The Ministry changed the name of the North-western monthon to that of monthon Phayap a fortnight after it gazetted the Regulations concerning the administration of the North-western monthon in 1900.

3. M.60/19: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, 79/718, 2 September 1906. The King wrote with reference to the effects of the suppression of the Shans' rebellion on the Prince of Lampang.

of the Mekong River, to limit the extraterritorial rights of their colonial subjects to three generations of residence, and to place those in monthons Udon and Isan under Siamese jurisdiction in the International Courts.¹

In this favourable atmosphere, the Ministry of the Interior began the final centralization of the administration of the former tributary states and outer provinces. It finally centralized the administration of the Malay provinces in the Area of the Seven Provinces in 1906, the former outer provinces in monthons Udon and Isan in 1907 and 1908, and the former tributary states in monthon Phayap between 1907 and 1915. It started by amalgamating the Malay provinces in the Area of the Seven Provinces into a monthon. It called it monthon Pattani after the name of the major province, and sent back the first High Commissioner of the Area of the Seven Provinces, Phraya Sakseni (Na Bunnag), as its first superintendent commissioner.² After the establishment of monthon Pattani, it used approximately the same procedure as it had done in the inner provinces to centralize the existing administration. It hoped to make a large number of the provincial nobility redundant by suppressing many of the

1. P. Duke, op.cit., pp. 253-258.

2. M.1/49 (ngo.) Bunch 2: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, 76/690, 25 July 1906.

existing provinces and by demoting them to the status of districts or even sub-districts. In this way, it demoted four of the seven Malay provinces, Nongchik, Raman, Ra-ngae, and Yaring to being districts.¹ It demoted a great number of provinces to being districts and sub-districts in monthons Phayap, Udon, and Isan.² The Ministry then hoped to join the suppressed and demoted provinces into larger existing or recently created units, to treat the chief towns of these units as the nuclei of new provinces, and to send its own men to supervise or to take over their administration. In this way, it joined the districts of Nongchik and Yaring to Pattani, the district of Raman to Yala, and the district of Ra-ngae to Saiburi.³ It joined the new districts and sub-districts in monthons Phayap, Udon, and Isan to the administrative areas (boriwen) which had been created in 1900 and 1901. In 1907, it emphasized the fact that it was going to use Pattani, Yala, Saiburi, and the administrative areas as new provincial units by giving them a new name changwat.⁴

1. 11/61: Nakhon Sawan Woraphinit to Wachirawut, 2 July 1923.

2. M.33/29: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 10/398, 21 April 1910 (for monthon Phayap); 3/91: Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat to Damrong, 15/87, 9 October 1910 (for monthon Udon); M.31/25: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 285/10485, 27 December 1907 (for monthon Isan).

3. 11/61: Nakhon Sawan Woraphinit to Wachirawut, 2 July 1923.

4. 'Rai-ngan prachum thesaphiban r.s.126', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners of 1907', Thesaphiban, iv (1908), 121-122. The word 'changwat' came to mean 'province' in general from 1916 onwards. Thesaphiban, xxi (1916), 21-22.

It also changed the name of the commissioners and area commissioners (khaluang boriwan) in monthons Pattani and Isan to deputy superintendent commissioners (palat monthon). It then either transformed the incumbent commissioners and area commissioners into deputy superintendent commissioners or sent out completely new men.¹

The Ministry also finally centralized the judicial and financial administration of the former outer provinces in monthons Udon and Isan in 1908. It worked closely with the Ministry of Justice in order to terminate the independent existence of their judicial administration. In 1908, the Ministry and the Ministry of Justice respectively sent public prosecutors and judges to take over the provincial (changwat) courts of monthons Udon and Isan.² It also co-operated with the Ministry of Finance in order to take over the financial administration of the former outer provinces. In 1908, the Ministry and the Ministry of Finance respectively sent revenue commissioners (khaluang sanphakon) and financial commis-

1. M.1/49 (ngo.) Bunch 2: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 119/4149, 20 July 1906 (for monthon Pattani); and M.31/25: Sisahathep to Chulalongkorn, 121/5301, 3 July 1908 (for monthon Isan).

2. M.31/25: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 305/22930, 25 March 1908.

sioners (khaluang khlung) to monthons Udon and Isan.¹

Furthermore, the Ministry effected far-reaching political changes when it finally centralized the financial and judicial administration of the former tributary states in monthon Phayap. In Chiangmai, for instance, it transformed the Prince into more or less of a puppet, when it respectively took over the Principality's financial and judicial administration in 1909 and 1915. It completely took over the financial administration, when the Prince obtained a loan and a fixed pension from the Ministry of Finance and in return handed over his share of the taxes.² The Ministry of Justice took over not only the courts of Chiangmai but also those of the other former tributary states.³ The Ministry had only to bide its time before the Ministry of Finance could put the Princes of Lamphun, Lampang, and Nan too on fixed pensions and it could then take over their financial administration. In the meantime, Phraya Surasi Wisitsak (Choei Kanlayanamit), the High Commissioner of monthon Phayap, took great pride in announcing that his officials had been able to collect all the

1. M.196/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 240/19710, 5 February 1908, and M.31/25: Sisahathep to Chulalongkorn, 121/5301, 3 July 1908.

2. M.37/22: Chulalongkorn to Chanthaburi, 73/1581, 2 February 1909.

3. Sutcharit Thawonsuk, Kan chat san huamuang khrang raek, The first reform of the judicial administration in the provinces (Bangkok 1964), p. 20.

taxes in the former Principality of Phrae within the fiscal year of 1910.¹ The King was so elated by this news that he personally ordered the governor of Phrae to be raised from the rank of Phra to that of Phraya.²

The Ministry encountered and overcame isolated and ineffectual opposition to the final centralization of the former tributary states and outer provinces between 1906 and 1915. As in 1902, it met with opposition from discontented noblemen, bandits who were encouraged by those same men, and from some people who resented the ever-increasing number of taxes and the all pervasive and sometimes heavy-handed bureaucracy.³ The Ministry took swift action in each instance and prevented the transformation of opposition by isolated individuals and groups into universal insurgency. In 1906, it arrested a nephew of the Prince of Chiangmai and exiled him to Songkhla as soon as it heard rumours that he might have been plotting insurrection against the government.⁴ In the following two years, it hunted down and

1. M.89/19: Surasi Wisitsak to Damrong, Telegram 60, 3 July 1910.

2. M.89/19: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, 82/656, 19 July 1910.

3. M.11/61: Yommarat to Wachirawut, 2/1462, 20 June 1923. Chao Phraya Yommarat (Pan Sukhum), the former superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Sithammarat, brilliantly summarised the causes of monthon Pattani's discontent with the central government from 1906 onwards.

4. M.60/19: Chasaenbodi to Prachinkitibodi, 3262/32112, 9 November 1906.

eventually killed a bandit in Phrae who had acquired some local popularity.¹ It also brought the former Prince of Phrae's wife to live in Bangkok, for the bandit had had tenuous connections with her household.² In monthon Pattani, it arrested a Holy Man (Phu Wiset) who had acquired some popular following and had vague connections with the former governor of Tani and sentenced him to thirteen years' imprisonment.³ The Ministry met hardly any opposition to the reforms in the north-east, for it had thoroughly overawed the population by its determined suppression of the Holy Men's rebellion. By 1910, it felt so secure that it recalled Prince Sanphasitthiprasong who had been High Commissioner at Ubonratchathani and had looked after the former outer provinces in monthon Isan since 1893.⁴ It then sent Phraya Chonlaburanurak (Charoen Charuchinda) to be the first superintendent commissioner of monthon Isan.

The Ministry of the Interior did not, however, manage to centralize all the eastern tributary states and outer provinces. It was not able to attempt the task, because the

1. M.51/83: Sisahathep to Sommot, 1380/8688, 20 October 1908.

2. M.51/83: Damrong to Sommot, 339/2171, 16 May 1908.

3. M.63/49: Phiphit Phakdi to Mahatthai, Telegram 78, 18 August 1909.

4. M.198/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private, 10 February 1910.

government had ceded them to France in order to persuade the French to limit the extraterritorial rights of their colonial subjects, to revoke the ban against Siamese military and fiscal personnel in the twenty-five kilometre zone on the right bank of the Mekong River, and to return the province of Chanthaburi which had been under French occupation since 1893. In the Franco-Siamese Convention of the 13th February 1904, the government ceded territories on the right bank of the Mekong River, Pak Tha, Khop, Kutsawadi, Pak Lay, Dan Sai, the Principality of Bassac, Melou Prey, and Stungtreng, which France claimed on behalf of the Kingdom of Luang Prabang, the territories of the Principality of Bassac on the left bank of the Mekong River, and the Kingdom of Cambodia. It also ceded some territories in monthon Burapha and the province of Trat on the south-east coast which were also claimed by Cambodia.¹ Three years later, in the Franco-Siamese Treaty of the 23rd March 1907, the government ceded the rest of monthon Burapha which France claimed on behalf of Cambodia in order to persuade the French to put their colonial subjects under Siamese jurisdiction in the International Courts and to return Dan Sai and Trat in which the Siamese were the ethnic majority.²

1. P.Duke, op.cit., pp. 253-258.

2. ibid., pp. 266-272.

Furthermore, the Ministry did not succeed in centralizing all the southern tributary states. It was not able to increase its control over them, because the government ceded them to Great Britain in order to remove one of the long-standing sources of friction between the two countries, to save money for the reforms in the rest of the country which had been effectively centralized, and to obtain a loan at 4% per annum for the construction of the railway which was to link Siam to Malaya. In the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909, the government ceded Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah, Perlis, Raman, and the islands of Langkawi on the western coast of modern Malaya to Great Britain.¹ It did, however, manage to retain Satun (Setul), the northern-most of the three tributary states which had comprised monthon Kedah on the grounds that the state had a high proportion of Siamese in its population.² The Ministry of the Interior sent Phraya Ratsadanupradit (Khosimbi na Ranong) to incorporate Satun into monthon Phuket as soon as the government had signed the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909. Phraya Ratsadanupradit retained the Sultan

1. Thamsook Numnonda, op.cit., p. 231. The Sultan of Kedah was quite justified when he was reported to have said, 'my country has been bought and sold like a buffalo' in 1909. J.M. Gullick, Malaya (London 1963), p. 36.

2. Thamsook Numnonda, op.cit., p. 233.

of Satun but took over the state's judicial and financial administration.¹

The Ministry of the Interior must have felt sad and humiliated but also relieved by the loss of territories between 1904 and 1909. It must have felt a sense of failure, for it had tried to centralize the administration of these tributary states and outer provinces. It must, however, have also felt that the loss of territories was a blessing in disguise, for it no longer had to undertake the difficult, dangerous, and thankless task of trying to centralize their administration. It had learnt too that the centralization of some of these tributary states had not been a profitable enterprise. In Kelantan, for instance, it not only made no money from its 10% share of the revenue after it had paid its British and Siamese officials but even made a loss, for, in 1908, its officials had ironically to borrow money from the Sultan at 6% per annum in order to be able to send Gold and Silver Trees and other tributes to Bangkok on behalf of the state.² From 1909 onwards, the Ministry had a smaller and more compact country in which to implement and to develop its Thesaphiban system of provincial administration.

1. M.26/29: Ratsadanupradit to Damrong, 4 December 1909.

2. W.A. Graham, op.cit., p. 3.

The implementation of the monthon
and provincial administration.

Between 1899 and 1915, the Ministry of the Interior not only integrated the former tributary states and outer provinces in monthons Phayap, Udon, Isan, and Pattani but also introduced new monthons into the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. In 1906, it created monthon Chanthaburi when France returned that province which she had occupied for the previous twelve years. In 1907, it joined Trat, the southeastern-most province which the French had governed since 1904, to monthon Chanthaburi. Between 1899 and 1915, it also subdivided monthons which were too large in order to increase their administrative efficiency. It divided monthon Nakhon Ratchasima into monthons Phetchabun and Nakhon Ratchasima in 1899, monthon Isan into monthons Roi-et and Ubon in 1912, and monthon Phayap into monthons Phayap and Maharat in 1915.¹

The Ministry of the Interior realized, however, that the establishment of monthons, the functional differentiation of the bureaucracy, and the promulgation of edicts and regulations did not in themselves entail the implementation of the Thesaphiban

1. See Appendix II: The establishment of the monthons; and Appendix III: The provinces in the monthons, infra, p.408 and p.411.

system of provincial administration. Prince Damrong himself knew that the implementation of the system was going to be uneven in spite of the encouraging start which Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Choei Kanlayanamit) and Prince Maruphong had made in monthons Phitsanulok and Ayutthaya. As early as 1898, he informed the King that the reform of the provincial administration was going to take place slowly because the Ministry could only establish a few monthons at a time, could only find a minimal number of energetic, qualified, and trustworthy officials, and was meeting resistance from an unspecified group of people.¹ By 1908, he became more aware than ever of the gap in time between the declarations of intentions and their actual fulfilment in the field. He told the King that the complete centralization of the former outer provinces in monthon Isan would take 'more than ten years', and added that this was because it was 'like the provinces in the inner monthons where the same system of administration has been set up but has not been completely successful to this day'.²

The Ministry discovered the factors which impeded the rapid implementation of reforms as soon as it began to

1. Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 116/27408, 11 November 1898, published in RKB, xv (1898), 508-512.

2. M.31/25: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 291/10629, 1 January 1908.

establish the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. It found that the limiting factors were inter-related and had repercussions on every stage, level, and sphere of the reforms. It found that it was not only short of qualified officials who could take over the provincial administration but also of funds which it needed in order to be able to transform the provincial nobility into salaried civil servants.¹ Its shortage of qualified officials and funds then meant that it not only had to establish a few monthons at a time but also had to retain the provincial nobility on the terms of the traditional system of provincial administration.² Its inability to transform the provincial nobility into salaried civil servants in

1. M.20/20: Damrong to Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat, 212/16190, 31 October 1894.

2. Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 116/27408, 11 November 1898, published in RKB, xv (1898), 508-512; and M.64/13: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private 48, 8 January 1893.

The Ministry of the Interior's shortage of funds was both absolute and relative. It was absolute inasmuch as the government's revenue was limited. It was relative inasmuch as the Ministry took an ever-increasing share of the expenditure. In 1892, it was eighth in the budgetary list and took 1.33% of the budget. By 1898, it reached first place in the list and took 12.11% of the budget. It remained at first place in the list for the next four years and took 25.75% of the budget in 1902. Chakkrit Noranitiphadungkan, Somdet Phrachao Borrommawongthoe Krom Phraya Damrong Rachanuphap kap Krasuang Mahatthai, Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and the Ministry of the Interior (Bangkok 1963), pp. 373-374.

turn made these people feel secure to obstruct further reforms in the provincial administration.

Under these circumstances, the Ministry's imposition of even the monthon level of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration had to be gradual. The Ministry had to recognize the political and economic strength of the provincial nobility and had to make the most prominent among them the first superintendent commissioners of a number of monthons. The King himself told Prince Damrong to appoint the governor of Phetburi, Phraya Surinthararuchai (Thet Bunnag), the first superintendent commissioner of monthon Ratburi, because he knew that the man and his family had 'powerful support and influence as well as higher rank and title than all the other governors' in the monthon.¹ In the same way, the Ministry appointed Phraya Singhaseni (Sa-ad Singhaseni), Phraya Kamhaeng Songkhram (Kat Singhaseni), and Phraya Suriyadet Wisetrit (Chan Intharakamhaeng) who were closely related to the traditional ruling family of Nakhon Ratchasima as its first three superintendent commissioners of monthon Nakhon

1. M.12/29: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 17 January 1895. I base my translation of chan and wiriya as support and influence on G.B. McFarland, Thai-English Dictionary (Stanford 1944), in which the meanings of 'chan' are given as 'approval, consent, and satisfaction', p. 268, and those of 'wiriya' as 'strength, vigour, fortitude, energy, exertion, influence, patience, diligence, and barvery', p. 589.

Ratchasima.¹ In 1896, the King appointed the governor of Ranong, Phraya Damrong Sutcharit (Khosimkong na Ranong), as the first superintendent commissioner of Chumphon, because he could not have ignored the fact that the man was the head of one of the most powerful Chinese commercial families in the south, a cadet branch of which held the governorship of one of the provinces (Langsuan) in the monthon.² In 1900, the Ministry appointed another member of the family, Phraya Ratsadanupradit (Khosimbi na Ra-nong) the governor of Trang, as the third superintendent commissioner of Phuket, in which the na Ranongs held the governorships of two (Ranong and Krabi) of the six provinces.³ Lastly, it appointed the governor of Chanthaburi, Phraya Witchayathibodi (Baen Bunnag), as the first superintendent commissioner of Chanthaburi again because it knew that the man and his family had 'powerful support and influence in the monthon.⁴

1. Phraya Singhaseni and Phraya Kamhaeng Songkhram were direct descendants of, and Phraya Suriyadet Wisetrit was indirectly related to the ruthless governor of Nakhon Ratchasima of 1859 and 1860, who was described in Henri Mouhot, Travels in the Central Parts of Indochina (Siam), Cambodia, and Laos (London 1864), ii, 113.

2. M.8/29: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, 79/732, 8 October 1896. Langsuan was later reduced to a district and amalgamated to the province of Chumphon.

3. M.9/25: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 79/2583, 4 June 1903. Kraburi was later reduced to a district and amalgamated to the province of Ranong.

4. M.79/13: Sisahathep to Damrong, Secret, 11 October 1898.

The Ministry had to retain a number of the provincial nobility not only as superintendent commissioners but also as officials in the monthon headquarters. In monthon Prachinburi, for instance, it had to recruit twenty-four out of the twenty-nine officials of the original monthon headquarter from the provincial nobility.¹ In Ratburi, it had to appoint a protégé of the Bunnag family as the first financial commissioner (khaluang khlung) of the monthon.² In monthon Chumphon, it had to appoint a business associate of Phraya Damrong Sutcharit (Khosimkong na Ranong) as the first provincial administration commissioner (khaluang mahatthai) of the monthon.³

The Ministry's gradual implementation of reforms at the monthon headquarters had far-reaching repercussions on the Thesaphihan system of provincial administration. It meant that the Ministry did not have a sufficient number of officials upon whom it could rely to implement the edicts and regulations in the field. Prince Alangkan (Malakun), the second superintendent commissioner of monthon Prachinburi, expressed this problem to the King when he wrote that,

1. M.24/20: Ritthirong to Damrong, 250, 30 January 1896.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, 'Prawat Phraya Sattayanukun (Nut Mahaniranon)', 'The biography of Phraya Sattayanukun', in Prince Phanuphanthuwong Woradet, Ruang Saiyok pen yangrai, A guide to Saiyok (Bangkok 1923), p. (8).

3. M.28/25: Rattanssetthi to Damrong, 1 September 1899.

'The qualifications of the various officials are not equal to the regulations which are sent from the ministries. The ministries know that the officials' knowledge is not equal to the tasks but still compose and send out a stream of regulations...We can only count the officials, from the superintendent commissioners right down to the clerks who are even more ignorant, as students.'¹

Prince Alangkan could have easily substantiated his case. The Ministry must have known, for instance, that Phraya Ratsadanupradit (Khosimbi na Ranong), the superintendent commissioner of monthon Phuket, could neither read nor write Siamese.² It certainly knew that the provincial commissioner of monthon Chumphon whom it had to appoint and thirty-six out of the thirty-nine clerks whom Phraya Damrong Sutcharit (Khosimkong na Ranong) the superintendent commissioner had appointed did not read or write Siamese.³

The Ministry's gradual implementation of reforms at the monthon headquarters affected particularly the financial administration of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. It was not just that the officials were incapable but that sometimes they were also unwilling to implement some

1. M.24/20: Alangkan to Chulalongkorn, 3/4437, 30 August 1899.

2. Krasuang Mahatthai, Thi raluk khlai wan sathapana Krasuang Mahatthai, A commemorative volume on the foundation of the Ministry of the Interior (Bangkok 1965), pp. 350-367.

3. M.28/25: Rattanasatthi to Damrong, 1 September 1899.

of the edicts and regulations which touched their personal vested interests. Phraya Surinthararuchai (Thet Bunnag), for instance, simply ignored a questionnaire concerning local fiscal organization of 1896, because he presumably did not want to facilitate the Ministry's take-over of monthon Ratur's financial administration which would automatically eliminate many of his sources of income.¹ The Ministry also gave the provincial nobility the opportunity to abuse the financial administration by retaining them as officials at the monthon headquarters. In 1906, it learnt, for instance, that Phraya Ratsadanupradit, the superintendent commissioner of monthon Phuket,

'and his family have been the chief men of the province for a long time, (that he and) his family have great business interests in Phuket,...that (he) at present enjoys practically a monopoly of trade in Phuket, and that he is opposed to anyone else coming into the district and trading there: that for this purpose he employs his power as an official of the Government to place obstructions in the way of other persons who attempt to open enterprises.'²

In other words, the Ministry failed initially to abolish the practice whereby officials 'ate the towns' (kin muang) or made a living out of the administration in certain monthons. It in fact enabled the na Ranongs in Chumphon and Phuket and the Bunnags in Chanthaburi 'to eat' not just towns but whole

1. Krasuang Mahatthai, Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.115, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1896 (Bangkok 1896), p. 14.

2. M.2/13: Sisahathep to Chulalongkorn, 255/33946, 24 December 1906.

monthons for a time.¹

The Ministry's imposition of reforms was gradual not only at the monthon but also at the provincial level of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. The Ministry discovered that its shortage of funds was a serious impediment to the immediate transformation of the provincial nobility into salaried civil servants. In 1894, for instance, Prince Damrong had to tell Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Choei Kanlayanamit) to restrain his zeal for bureaucratic reforms, for the Ministry had funds to give salaries only to officials in Phitsanulok and not to those in the other provinces of the monthon.² Two years later, he told Phraya Sukhumnawinit (Pan Sukhum) that the Ministry could not afford to pay salaries to the governor and officials of Songkhla upon the establishment of monthon Nakhon Sithammarat.³ The Ministry at the same time found that its shortage of qualified officials meant that it had to retain both salaried and unsalaried members of the provincial nobility.⁴ In 1898, for instance, Prince Damrong

1. The documents are silent on whether or not the Bunnag, Singhaseni, and Intharakamhaeng families monopolised the financial life of their monthons in the same way.

2. M.20/20: Damrong to Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat, 212/16190, 31 October 1894.

3. M.32/20: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 18/1731, 16 April 1896.

4. M.64/13: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private 48, 8 January 1893.

reported that the provincial nobility of Suphanburi in monthon Nakhon Chaisi formed 'an assembly of crooks, ..., which has not yet been thoroughly eradicated'.¹ In the same year, he told the King that 'it is truly amazing but it can be said that the governors and officials in monthon Nakhon Sawan are all related'.² The Ministry also failed initially to remove the Bunnags from their dominant position in Phetburi in monthon Ratburi and from Chanthaburi, the na Nakhons from Nakhon Sithammarat, the na Songkhlas from Songkhla, and the Chantharotchawongs from Phattalung in monthon Nakhon Sithammarat, the na Ranongs from Ranong in monthon Phuket, and the Phromsakhas from Sakon Nakhon in monthon Udon.³

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Chotmai het raya thang prachao nongyathoe Krommamun Damrong Rachanuphap senabodi Krasuang Mahattai sadet truat ratchakan huamuang monthon Krung Kao monthon Nakhon Chaisi monthon Ratburi nai r.s. 117, A tour of inspection of monthons Ayutthaya, Nakhon Chaisi, and Ratburi in 1898 (Bangkok 1898), p. 5.

2. M.30/25: Rai-ngan prachao nongyathoe Krommaluang Damrong Rachanuphap sadet truat ratchakan monthon Nakhon Sawan r.s.117, A report of Prince Damrong's tour of monthon Nakhon Sawan in 1898:

3. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, 'Prawat Phraya Suraphan Phisut (Thian Bunnag)', 'A biography of Phraya Suraphan Phisut', in Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Chotmai het ruang praphat ton nai ratchakan thi ha, Rama V's informal tours (Bangkok 1923), pp.(1)-(8) (for the Bunnags). M.189/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 145/7917, 22 November 1901. (for the na Nakhons and na Songkhlas). Luang Siworawat (Phin Chantharotchawong), 'Phongsawadan muang Phatthalung', 'The chronicle of Phatthalung', in Phongsawadan muang Songkhla lae Phatthalung, The chronicles of Songkhla and Phatthalung (Bangkok 1962), pp.109-112. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Tamnam muang Ranong, The history of Ranong (2nd edn., Bangkok 1931) p.77. Phraya Prachantaprathe Tani (Ngonkham Phromsakha), Tamnan muang Sakon Nakhon, The history of Sakon Nakhon (Bangkok 1924), pp. 45-74.

The Ministry's retention of the provincial nobility had the same types of repercussions on the provincial as on the monthon level of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. Prince Damrong himself foresaw the disadvantages of retaining the provincial nobility on his very first tour of the provinces in 1892. On that occasion, he reported to the King that the incumbent governors 'do not usually understand Bangkok regulations, and that it was difficult to find junior officials who were neither obtuse nor given to petty peculations'.¹ Prince Damrong's apprehensions were fully justified by events. Eleven years later, the Ministry discovered, for instance, that the provincial nobleman whom it had appointed as public prosecutors (yokkrabat) of Prachinburi and Chachoengsao in monthon Prachinburi had kept no records of 'the number of current, outstanding, and terminated cases'.² As late as 1914, it found out that the provincial nobleman whom it had retained as the governor of Lomsak in monthon Phetchabun 'had no abilities to serve as a governor and had dedicated himself to his private business interests to the extent of forfeiting respect and popularity'.³

1. M.64/13: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private 48, 8 January 1893.

2. M.122/13: Sisena to Damrong, 26 May 1903.

3. M.202/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 101/9632, 15 January 1914.

The Ministry's retention of the provincial nobility opened the way not only to incompetence and corruption but also to resistance against further reforms. The Ministry encountered passive resistance rather than active opposition to the reforms because the nobility of the inner provinces were more familiar with the central government's coercive powers than those of the outer provinces and tributary states. It found that the provincial nobility's resistance mostly took the form of a general malevolence towards the reforms. Prince Damrong thought, for instance, that its effects could be felt rather than seen. In 1898, he told the King that since, 'the governors and officials in monthon Nakhon Sawan are all related, ..., outsiders there are usually unhappy'.¹

The Ministry realized, however, that the provincial nobility's resistance was inarticulate only in expression and that it was in fact directed specifically against the reforms in the provincial financial administration. It knew that they opposed the abolition of the common people's service, the introduction of commutation tax, and the take-over of all the other taxes because these measures directly undermined their

1. M.30/25: Rai-ngan Phrachao nongyathoe Krommaluang Damrong Rachanuphap sadet truat ratchakan monthon Nakhon Sawan r.s.117, A report of Prince Damrong's tour of monthon Nakhon Sawan in 1898.

political and economic bases of power. In 1895, for instance, Prince Damrong reported to the King that the Ministry could not immediately abolish the common people's service and introduce commutation tax into monthons Prachinburi and Ratburi because the nobility had not only provincial but metropolitan support and influence.¹ In 1898, the Prince witnessed a clash between the superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Sithammarat, Phraya Sukhumnaiwinit (Pan Sukhum), and the governor of Nakhon Sithammarat, Phraya Sithammarat (Nuphrom na Nakhon), which revealed particularly well the provincial nobility's opposition to the reform of the provincial financial administration. He learnt that Phraya Sukhumnaiwinit had arrested district officers in Nakhon Sithammarat who had been ordered to round-up elephants for the use of the monthon headquarters but had also followed Phraya Sithammarat's orders to undertake the same task for the provincial headquarters. Phraya Sukhumnaiwinit knew, however, that Phraya Sithammarat did not need any elephants for he already possessed over a hundred of them but had deliberately chosen the occasion to challenge the government's control over the service of the common people.² By 1901, the Ministry encountered opposition from the provincial

1. M.17/22: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 106/17780, 20 August 1895.

2. M.34/20: Sukhumnaiwinit to Damrong, 229/4523, 23 March 1898.

nobility of Lomsak who quite specifically resented the abolition of the common people's service, the introduction of commutation tax, and the centralization of the other taxes in monthon Phetchabun.¹

The Ministry tactfully handled the resistance it encountered in the inner provinces. It could not allow the passive resistance to develop into open opposition while it was also trying to centralize the outer provinces and tributary states. The King realized, for instance, that Phraya Sukhumnawinit had called Phraya Sithammarat's bluff in 1898, but ordered the Ministry to restrain him from putting the district officers on trial as a way of deciding which of them was the master of the monthon.² The Ministry therefore had to drop the cases against the district officers and had to retain Phraya Sithammarat until it felt strong enough to retire him on a pension in 1901.³ It was to use the honourable retirement on a pension as the most tactful method of gradually displacing the provincial nobility from governorships for the following decades.⁴

1. M.34/25: Phetrattanasongkhram to Damrong, secret, 1/563, 30 July 1901.

2. M.34/20: Sommot to Ratchawaranukun, 19/150, 15 May 1898.

3. M.189/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 145/7917, 22 November 1901.

4. The King constantly told Prince Damrong that the Ministry of the Interior's officials must have 'thak' (i.e. tact) in order to be able to centralize the provincial administration. M.16/13: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, 53/539, 26 August 1899. The King referred particularly to the centralization of the northern tributary states.

It retired, for instance, the governor of Songkhla at the same time as the governor of Nakhon Sithammarat.¹ It retired the governor of Phatthalung in monthon Nakhon Sithammarat in 1903.² It did not manage, however, to remove the Bunnags from Phetburi until 1914 and the na Ranongs from Ranong until after Prince Damrong's period of office.³ It left Phraya Prachantaprathet Thani (Ngonkham Promsakha) as the governor of Sakon Nakhon in monthon Udon until he died in 1923.⁴

The Ministry's implementation of reforms at the monthon level of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration was gradual but sure. It knew that its first goal was to dislodge the provincial nobility from the superintendent commissionerships and the monthon headquarters. It used the same method at this as at the provincial level of the administration. It retired Phraya Damrong Sutcharit (Khosimkong na Ranong) from the superintendent commissionership of monthon Chumphon in 1901. Six years later, it used the death of Phraya Suriyadet Wisetrit (Chan Intharakamhaeng) as an excuse to appoint Phraya Chasaenyabodi (Uap Paorohit) as the fourth superintendent

1. M.189/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 145/7917, 22 November 1901.

2. Luang Siworawat (Phin Chantharotchawong), 'op.cit.', p.112.

3. M.202/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 102/9633, 15 January 1914, concerning the retirement of Phraya Surinthararuchai (Thian Bunnag) from the governorship of Phetburi.

4. Phraya Prachantaprathet Thani (Ngonkham Phromsakha), op.cit., p. 74.

commissioner of monthon Nakhon Ratchasima but as the first to have come from outside the traditional ruling family of Nakhon Ratchasima. In 1908, it suspended Phraya Witchayathibodi (Baen Bunnag), the superintendent commissioner of monthon Chanthaburi, in order to give him an opportunity 'to clear up matters concerning government money'.¹ In the following year, it retired him permanently presumably because he was unable to render satisfactory accounts. In 1913, it used the death of Phraya Ratsadanupradit (Khosimbi na Ranong) as an opportunity to break the na Ranongs' hold and to appoint an outsider to the superintendent commissionership of monthon Phuket.

The Ministry tried repeatedly and succeeded partly but significantly to displace the Bunnags from monthon Ratburi. In 1899, it retired Chao Phraya Suraphan Phisut (Thet Bunnag), who had been the superintendent commissioner of the monthon under the rank and title of Phraya Surinthararuchai since 1895. By 1904, however, it acknowledged once more the Bunnags' 'powerful support and influence' in the area and appointed another member of the family, Phraya Kraiphet Rattanasongkhram (Chae Bunnag), as the fourth superintendent commissioner of the monthon. It did in fact appoint two more members of the family as superintendent commissioners of monthon Ratburi between 1915 and the dismantlement of the Thesaphiban system

1. M.197/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 16/419, 12 April 1908.

of provincial administration in 1932 and 1933.¹ It could nevertheless claim partial success in its dealings with the Bunnags of Ratburi, for it did prevent them from succeeding each other into the superintendent commissionership and it did manage to limit their control to twenty-three out of the thirty-eight years of the monthon's existence.² In any case, the Ministry eventually by-passed the provincial noblemen who were superintendent commissioners by gradually eliminating the provincial nobility from the monthon headquarters. In 1898, for instance, it replaced the protégé of the Bunnag family who was the first financial commissioner of monthon Ratburi by its own official from Bangkok. It succeeded in appointing its own men to the major positions in the monthon headquarters in the following year.³

The Ministry replaced the provincial noblemen who were superintendent commissioners with men who possessed special attributes. It appointed princes to superintendent commissionerships and enhanced that office with royal authority.

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, and Phraya Ratchasena (Siri Thephatsadin na Ayutthaya), Thesaphiban, The Thesaphiban system of provincial administration (2nd edn., Bangkok 1960), p. 104.

2. See Appendix IV: The superintendent commissioners from 1893 to 1915, p.

3. M.29/25: Suraphan Phisut to Damrong, no dates. A report concerning monthon Ratburi which Prince Damrong presented to the King on the 6th November 1900.

Between 1892 and 1915, the Ministry appointed forty-seven men to High Commissionerships and superintendent commissionerships, eight of whom were Princes and one of whom was a junior member of the royal family of the mom ratchawong rank.¹ In particular, it appointed three of King Chulalongkorn's half-brothers and one of his sons, the Princes Prachak Sinlapakhom, Sanphasitthiprasong, Maruphong Siriphat, and Lopburi Ramet respectively to the High Commissionerships of monthons Udon and Isan and the superintendent commissionerships of monthons Ayutthaya and Nakhon Sithammarat. The Ministry appointed high-ranking army officers to superintendent commissionerships and endowed that office with military authority. Between 1892 and 1915, it appointed thirteen officers to superintendent commissionerships, of whom three were lieutenant-generals, four were major-generals, and six were colonels. It combined royal and military authority in Prince Maruphong, the superintendent commissioner of monthon Ayutthaya, and Phraya Surinthararacha (M.R. Sit Suthat), who were respectively a major-general and a lieutenant-general.

The Ministry also endowed the officials whom it sent to replace the provincial noblemen who were superintendent

1. The seven Princes included one Chao Fa (Lopburi Ramet), three phra-ong chao (Prachak Sinlapakhom, Sanphasitthiprasong, and Maruphong), and three Mom Chao (Alangkan, Watthana, and Thamrongsiri Sithawat).

commissioners with extra authority. It made superintendent commissioners reside for long terms in their monthons in order to enhance their personal authority with long residence. Between 1892 and 1915, it made fifty-nine changes of superintendent commissioners, whose average length of residence in a monthon was approximately 6.1 years.¹ It maintained thirteen superintendent commissioners in their monthons for over ten years. In particular, it maintained Phraya Boran Ratchathanin (Phon Dechakhup) as superintendent commissioner of monthon Ayutthaya for twenty-six years, Phraya Suntharaburi (Chom Suntharanchun) and Phraya Dechanuchit (Na Bunnag) as superintendent commissioners of monthons Nakhon Chaisi and Pattani for seventeen years, Phraya Uthaimontri (Charoen Charuchinda) as superintendent commissioner of monthon Phitsanulok for sixteen years, and Prince Lopburi Ramet as superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Sithammarat for fifteen years. The Ministry gave special legal authority to two of its superintendent commissioners in order to enable them to have extra powers to enforce the law in their monthons.

1. I have so far been unable to discover two of the superintendent commissioners' lengths of residence, and have had to base this average number on fifty-seven lengths of residence of superintendent commissioners. I will rectify this inexactitude as soon as possible. I hope, however, that the present number will not be too far from the final one.

It enabled Prince Maruphong to supercede the judicial authorities in criminal cases when it made him special commissioner (khaluang phiset) as well as superintendent commissioner of monthon Prachinburi in 1903.¹ In 1905, it authorised Phraya Ratsadanupradit (Khosimbi na Ranong) to promulgate emergency regulations with the concurrence of the chief judge in order to give them maximum powers to deal with the violent industrial disputes in the tin-mines of monthon Phuket.²

The Ministry's implementation of reforms at the provincial level was as gradual but as sure as at the monthon level of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. The Ministry slowly injected its own men into the key positions at the provincial headquarters and bypassed the provincial noblemen whom it had had to retain as governors. It used to a certain extent the Dutch method of administration in Java whereby the Dutch appointed a (native) civil servant as a deputy (patih) to the hereditary governor (regent) of each province (regency). The Dutch then bypassed the regent and

1. The Ministry always called Prince Maruphong the special commissioner rather than the superintendent commissioner. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Prawat Bukkhon Samkhan Chabap Som-bun, Biographies of important men (Bangkok 1962), p. 69. The Ministry enabled a special commissioner to supercede the judicial authorities in criminal cases in 1897. Krasuang Mahatthai, Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.116, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1897 (Bangkok 1897), p. 49.

2. M.9/25: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, 259/1560, 17 January, 1905.

governed each regency through the patih.¹ In monthon Nakhon Sithammarat, for instance, the Ministry appointed deputy governors (palat) to the provincial noblemen whom it had had to retain as governors of Songkhla, Nakhon Sithammarat, and Phatthalung.² It likewise appointed a deputy governor to the member of the Bunnag family whom it had had to retain as governor of Phetburi in monthon Ratburi.³ It did not, however, openly bypass the governors and governed directly through the deputy governors. It presumably trusted the deputy governors to initiate as many reforms as possible at their own discretion. In the long run, the Ministry preferred to wait until it could dislodge the provincial nobility from the provincial headquarters and fill the vacancies with its own men. In Samut Songkhram in monthon Ratburi, for instance, it took from 1895 to 1904 to displace the provincial nobility from the provincial headquarters and to replace them with its own men.⁴ The Ministry then made the governors reside for a long time in

1. J.S. Furnivall, Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy (2nd edn., Cambridge 1944), p. 191-192.

2. M.11/25: Sukhumnawinit to Damrong, 4 October 1898.

3. M.3/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 73/18450, 10 September 1898.

4. M.19/25: Ratchaphongsanurak to Damrong, 10/1218, 4 July 1904.

their provinces in order to endow the office of governorship too with an aura of permanence. It maintained, for instance, Phraya Nakhon Phra-ram (M.R. Lek Phayakkhasena) as the governor of Suphanburi in monthon Nakhon Chaisi from 1902 to 1913 in order to enable him to 'thoroughly eradicate the assembly of crooked' provincial noblemen whom it had had to retain for so long at the provincial headquarters.¹

The Ministry did ultimately use harsh methods to deal with the provincial nobility. It forcibly eliminated some of them from the provincial headquarters when it considered that they were openly resisting reforms. In 1899, it ordered, for instance, a retired governor of Tak in monthon Nakhon Sawan to go to live in Bangkok because it thought that he was encouraging the officials who were his relations to resist the new governors whom it had sent from outside the province.² Prince Damrong hoped presumably to make an example of the man, for he well knew that the provincial nobility of monthon Nakhon Sawan had tended to make life difficult for outsiders. The Ministry also continued to transfer some of the provincial nobility from one part of the country to another in order to

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., pp. 515-519.

2. M.84/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private 171/38048, 24 February 1899.

sever them from their local ties. Sometime between 1906 and 1909, it transferred a provincial nobleman of Lomsak to the headquarters of monthon Udon. It knew that he had earlier not only been the leader of the opposition against the abolition of the common people's personal service, the introduction of commutation tax, and the centralization of the other taxes in monthon Phetchabun but also had 'too many friends in Lomsak, who usually monopolised (the business life of) the province and prevented other people from participating in it.'¹

The government, furthermore, removed a vital cornerstone from the provincial nobility's economic basis of power when it promulgated the Edict concerning commutation tax of 1902.² The Ministry of the Interior had prepared the way by gradually abolishing the common people's personal service and by introducing commutation tax into a few monthons at a time. In this respect, Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Choei Kanlayanamit) had been particularly successful in monthon Phitsanulok between 1894 and 1898. The Ministry knew, however, that the other superintendent commissioners had been either unwilling or unable to implement such reforms in their monthons. The

1. M.198/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 90/7838, 13 July 1909. I have so far been unable to discover when exactly the Ministry transferred this man to monthon Udon.

2. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuanyut, op.cit., iii (Bangkok 1906), pp. 1882-1889.

government's Edict concerning commutation tax of 1902 gave the Ministry the weapon which it could use to ruin the provincial nobility's fortune. It was now authorised not only to abolish the common people's personal service and to introduce commutation tax but also to reduce the tax from eighteen baht to six baht per year. It was also enabled to take over the collection of the commutation tax through the agency of its village elders. Even if it were to gradually implement this, it would in the long run impoverish the provincial nobility by reducing the income from the commutation tax by two-thirds.

The Ministry's implementation of reforms at the monthon and provincial levels had repercussions on the social standing of both the metropolitan and the provincial nobility. The Ministry's reforms produced social mobility among the nobility in several directions. First of all, the Ministry sent members of the metropolitan nobility to administer monthons and provinces and transformed them into a national nobility.¹ Between 1892 and 1915, it appointed thirty-three out of forty-seven High Commissioners and superintendent commissioners from among the metropolitan nobility.² During the same period, it also

1. I include members of the royal family among the 'metropolitan nobility'.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., pp. 96-106.

appointed members of the metropolitan nobility to the majority of provincial administration commissions, revenue commissions, and gendarmerie commissions in the monthon headquarters and sent others to take over the majority of governorships, deputy governorships, public prosecutors, and revenue officerships in the former inner provinces.¹

As a result of the transformation of the metropolitan nobility into a national nobility, the Ministry tended to reduce the social standing of the provincial nobility when it gradually displaced them from superintendent commissions and governorships and replaced them by members of the metropolitan nobility. It also reduced their social standing when it used the Edict concerning commutation tax of 1902 to undermine and to ruin their economic basis of power. In 1898, for instance, it took the governorship of Ratburi in monthon Ratburi away from the Wongsarots who had traditionally ruled the province and gave it to a man from Bangkok.² In 1903, it

1. I wish to say that my estimates for the proportion of the metropolitan and provincial nobility in the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration are extremely tentative. The impression that the Ministry of the Interior appointed men to the majority of the positions in the monthon headquarters and sent men to take over the majority of the senior positions in the provincial headquarters is based on the seven files of the Ministry's Series 51 Papers concerning appointments and transfers of officials between 1893 and 1915. I have not attempted to quantify the statement because the Papers are very incomplete and are concerned with the appointments of officials only insofar as they were deemed of interest to the Royal Secretariat and the King.

2. Samut Ratburi, A guide to Ratburi (Bangkok 1925), p. 42.

did the same thing to the Chantharotchawongs who had traditionally ruled Phatthalung in monthon Nakhon Sithammarat. It then reduced such families to the status of petty nobility and kept them there by appointing their members to most of the junior positions in the provincial administration.¹ It appointed, for instance, a member of the Chantharotchawong family to a district officership in Phatthalung in 1916.²

The Ministry's implementation of reforms at the monthon and provincial levels also caused, however, some upward social mobility among the provincial nobility. The Ministry created a national nobility out of not only the metropolitan but also the provincial nobility. It did this by appointing members of the provincial nobility as superintendent commissioners. Between 1892 and 1915, it appointed thirteen out of forty-seven High Commissioners and superintendent commissioners from among the provincial nobility. It appointed, for instance, two na Ranongs as superintendent commissioners. It even appointed

1. If my impressionistic estimates for the proportion of the metropolitan and provincial nobility in the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration are reasonably near the truth, I assume that the superintendent commissioners and governors appointed most of the other positions in the provincial headquarters from among the provincial nobility.

2. Luang Siworawat (Phin Chantharotchawong), 'op.cit', p. 110.

a na Nakhon as the fourth superintendent commissioner of monthon Chumphon in 1913, although it had encountered the family's resistance against the abolition of the common people's personal service in Nakhon Sithammarat in 1898. It also sent members of the provincial nobility away from their provinces and appointed them to some of the positions in the monthon and provincial headquarters. In 1898, it sent, for instance, the governor of Phuket's assistant (phu chuai), who was a member of the provincial nobility, as an assistant to one of the commissioners at the headquarters of monthon Nakhon Sithammarat. It made him the revenue officer of Phatthalung in the same monthon in 1900 and promoted him to be the supervisory commissioner of Ra-ngae in the Area of the Seven Provinces (boriwen chet huamuang) in 1904. It promoted him to be the first deputy commissioner of monthon Pattani in 1906. He retired in 1914.¹

Between 1899 and 1915, the Ministry had, however, not only to implement the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration but also to develop it to increase its efficiency. In 1899, it provided the superintendent commissioner with a general assistant by creating the new post of the deputy super-

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, op.cit., pp. 510-514. The biography of Phraya Sathawon Thalangkun (On na Thalang).

intendent commissioner (palat monthon).¹ It did not, however, define the deputy superintendent commissioner's role until 1904. In 1903, it had to ask Prince Alangkan to resign from the superintendent commissionership of monthon Prachinburi for various reasons, one of which was his chronic inability to co-operate with the governor of Prachinburi.² It then presumably saw for the first time the possibility that the superintendent commissioner and the governor might have found it embarrassing to coexist in the same province. In other words, the superintendent commissioner would have tended to interfere in the affairs of his province of residence and the governor would have resented this interference in his sphere of jurisdiction. In 1904, the Ministry solved this predicament by making the deputy superintendent commissioner responsible for the governorship of the superintendent commissioner's residence. It gave him the overall responsibility for the district administration of the monthon at the same time.³

The Ministry then found that it had in fact over-burdened

1. M.117/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 206/6391, 28 December 1899.

2. M.27/25: Maruphong to Damrong, 6 December 1903.

3. M.11/6: Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.123, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1904, typescript, p. 22.

the deputy superintendent commissioner with three jobs and had also duplicated one of them with that of the provincial administration commissioner (khaluang mahatthai) whom it had originally made responsible for the district administration of the monthon. It resolved this functional duplication in 1913 by making the deputy superintendent commissioner responsible for only the district administration by abolishing the office of provincial administration commissionership, and the governorship of the province of the superintendent commissioner's residence.¹ In the meantime, it had provided the deputy superintendent commissioner himself with a general assistant by creating the post of the monthon registrar (samiantra monthon) in 1905. It made him responsible for looking after the expenditure of the deputy superintendent commissioner and the maintenance of the headquarters of the monthon.²

The Ministry also improved the performance of the provincial headquarters by making changes which were parallel to those it made at the monthon level of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. By about 1900, the Ministry thought that the district of the governor's residence (amphoe

1. Krasuang Mahatthai, Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban pi thi sipkao ph.s. 2456, The nineteenth meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1913 (Bangkok 1913), p. 20.

2. M.13/6: Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s. 124, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1905, typescript, p. 15.

muang) did not need a district officer and put the area under the jurisdiction of the deputy governor, to whom it thought it had hitherto given too little work.¹ It probably also felt that the coexistence of the governor and a district officer in the same district was as potentially embarrassing as that of the superintendent commissioner and a governor in the same province. It found, however, that the deputy governor was unable to fulfil his functions as the volume of work steadily increased in the following decade. In 1911, it therefore relieved him of the responsibility for the district of the governor's residence and put the area back under the jurisdiction of a district officer.²

The Ministry knew, however, that the success of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration depended not so much on bureaucratic sophistication as on the quality of its officials. It realized that its shortage of funds and qualified officials meant that at first it had to retain the provincial nobility in the provincial administration. It did, however, find ways to improve the administrative standards of

1. I base my approximate dating of the suppression of the district of the governor's residence on, Luang Bamrong Ratthanikon (But Anekbun), Prawat lae khwam song cham, Memoirs (Bangkok 1963), p. 93, according to which the amphoe muang of Prachinburi was suppressed in 1900.

2. M.200/51: Damrong to Wachirawut, 20/1391, 10 May 1911.

this group of people. It sent, for instance, a number of them to join the classes of the District Administration schools, two of which had been founded by Prince Maruphong and Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Choei Kanlayanamit) in monthons Ayutthaya and Phitsanulok in 1897 and 1900.¹ In 1903, it was able to send more to a third school, which Prince Maruphong founded as soon as he became the superintendent commissioner of monthon Prachinburi.² It is unfortunately impossible to know either the proportion of the provincial nobility who attended these schools or the differences which the courses made to their administrative skills.

The Ministry also began to devise a new method for the education of the provincial nobility in the provincial headquarters by 1903. It felt that it could no longer afford to lose the services of officials while it sent them to attend District Administration schools. It therefore took over an idea which Prince Maruphong had pioneered in monthon Ayutthaya and planned to make the provincial nobility serve an apprenticeship (samrong ratchakan), during which period it authorised officials to examine them on one branch of the administration

1. M.1/41: Sisahathep to Sommot, 121/822, 27 April 1900 (for Ayutthaya); and M.20/20: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 47/973, 16 May (for Phitsanulok).

2. Phraya Satchaphirom Udomratchaphakdi (Suang Siphon), Lao hai luk fang, Stories for my children (1st edn., Bangkok 1955) p. 47.

at a time. It proposed to give each apprentice a text-book called the Golden Book (samut lang thong), in which it set out the major edicts and regulations of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration.¹ It ordered the officials to note at the back of the Golden Book when the apprentice had reached proficiency in a particular branch of the administration. It would then make him a full but the most junior official in that branch. It would not, however, promote him until he had shown proficiency in all branches, namely the provincial and the district, the judicial, and the financial administration.² It made this method of entry and promotion compulsory in 1907.³

The Ministry of the Interior did not, however, concern itself only with the implementation and the development of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration but also with other aspects of the government's activities in the provinces. It either helped other ministries to extend their activities into the provinces or became itself the agent which promoted the work of the other ministries in the provinces. It helped, for instance, the Buddhist Church to spread elementary education in the provinces between 1898 and 1902. It ordered its

1. I found one copy of the Golden Book in the Damrong Library in Bangkok designated as, Baep rian rabiap amphoe, A text-book on district administration (Bangkok, c. 1903), pp. 166.

2. M.1/41: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 155/4868, 27 July 1903.

3. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.126', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1907', Thesaphiban, IV (1907), pp. 130-136.

officials in the monthon and provincial headquarters to help the monks with their correspondence, to distribute text-books to monastery schools, and to handle the money which monks of the Thammayut sect were not allowed to touch.¹ Between 1902 and 1909, it co-operated with the Ministry of Education which had taken over the task of extending education into the provinces from the Buddhist Church. It provided rooms at monthon headquarters for the educational commissioners (thammakan monthon) whom the Ministry of Education sent to superintend elementary and secondary education in the provinces. In 1909, it itself took over the responsibility for elementary education in the provinces on the grounds that it was the 'owner of the provinces'.² It meant by that that it had the organization which the Ministry of Education lacked to implement the government's policies concerning elementary education in the provinces. It ordered the commune elder (kamnan) of each sub-district (tambon) to form himself, the abbot of the sub-

1. D.K. Wyatt, 'The Beginnings of Modern Education in Thailand, 1868-1910' (Cornell Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1966), Appendix H, p. 638. Dr. Wyatt also pointed out (p. 338) that the government used the extension of elementary education into the provinces as a means of centralizing the Buddhist Church. It can be said that the centralization of the Buddhist Church in 1902, supplemented and complemented that of the provincial administration between 1892 and 1915.

2. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s. 128', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1909', Thesaphiban, VIII (1909), 80.

district's chief monastery, and the sub-district doctor into a sub-district assembly (sapha tambon), which then became responsible for making boys literate by the age of thirteen and for collecting the education subscription (suksa phli) of one baht per year from the parents.¹

From 1901 onwards, the Ministry helped to extend the Ministry of Agriculture's activities into the provinces. It provided rooms in the headquarters for the agricultural commissioner (khaluang kaset) whom the Ministry of Agriculture sent to superintend land-registration in monthon Ayutthaya in 1901. From that time onwards, it welcomed as many agricultural commissioners as the Ministry of Agriculture was able to send to its monthon and provincial headquarters.² From 1904 onwards, it also helped the Ministry of Agriculture to introduce scientific methods of sericulture and to foster the silk-weaving industry in the north-eastern provinces.³ It was admittedly not altogether altruistic in this project, for it wanted to use economic development as a means to secure the loyalty of the north-eastern leaders and people. Its motives apart,

1. ibid., 80-84.

2. Krasuang Kaset, Prawat Krasuang Kaset, The history of the Ministry of Agriculture (Bangkok 1957), pp. 59-61 and pp. 82-83.

3. ibid., pp. 70-73.

however, it nevertheless initiated economic development in the north-east. In 1910, it asked the superintendent commissioners to inform the Ministry of Agriculture of the amount of unclaimed lands and the kinds of crops in the monthons so that agricultural experts could be sent to investigate the possibilities for further developments.¹ In the following year, it decided to participate more actively in the work of agricultural development presumably because it thought that it had the organization which the Ministry of Agriculture lacked to implement the government's agricultural policies. It ordered commune elders to convey agricultural information to the villagers.²

From 1903 onwards, the Ministry helped to extend the Ministry of Defence's activities into the provinces. It helped the Ministry of Defence to introduce a compulsory two-year military conscription into the provinces by ordering its officials to summon the people and to direct them to the monthon military headquarters. It welcomed military conscription presumably because it thought that it finally broke all possible ties between the common people and the provincial

1. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s. 129', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1910', X (1910), 107-109.

2. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s. 130', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1911', Thesaphiban, X, (1911), 263.

nobility.¹ The Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence began to experiment with military conscription in monthon Nakhon Sawan in 1903.² They introduced it into monthon Ratburi in the following year.³ In 1905, the government promulgated the Edict concerning military conscription which made military conscription compulsory throughout the Kingdom.⁴ The two ministries concerned with the implementation of this Edict continued, however, to introduce military conscription into the provinces at a gradual pace. They did not, for instance, introduce it into monthon Udon until 1909.⁵

From 1906 onwards, the Ministry also helped to extend the government's health services into the provinces. At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1906, Prince Damrong asked them to accept the responsibility for health services on the grounds that they would be helping to increase the population who would in time grow up to serve in the forces

1. Kachon Sukkhaphanit, Thanandon Phrai, The condition of the common people (Bangkok 1962), pp. 44-53. Kachon thought that the long-term result of military conscription was certainly the complete emancipation of the common people from any political, administrative, economic, and emotional ties to the nobility.

2. M.30/25: Chonlaburanurak to Sisahathep, 20 February 1903.

3. M.192/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 161/6194, 14 September 1904.

4. Kachon Sukkhaphanit, op.cit., pp. 52-53.

5. M.37/22: Damrong to Sommot, 1342/12032, 4 February 1909.

and to pay taxes to the government. He informed them that the Ministry planned to send a medical officer (phaet monthon) to each monthon, who would give medical instructions to the people, vaccinate them against smallpox and cholera, and sell medicine (ya osot sala) for the cure of malaria and other diseases. He proposed to obtain vaccine and pills from the Department of Health (Krom Phayaban) in the Ministry of Education.¹ He also encouraged superintendent commissioners to found hospitals in the monthons. Phraya Ratsadanupradit (Khosimbi na Ranong) responded immediately and founded a hospital in Phuket in the same year. Phraya Chasaenyabodi (Uap Pao-rohit) and Phraya Ammarintha-raruchai (Chamrat Rattanakun) soon followed suit and founded hospitals in Nakhon Ratchasima and Sukhothai respectively in 1907. Phraya Boran Ratchathanin (phon Dechakhup) later founded a hospital in Ayutthaya in 1912.² At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1907, Prince Damrong asked them to order commune and village elders to elect someone knowledgeable in traditional medicine to act as doctor (mo tambon) in each sub-district. He

1. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s. 125', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1906', Thesaphiban, II (1906), 127-132.

2. Sutcharit Thawonsuk, Phra Prawat lae ngan khong somdet Phraborommawongthoe Krom Phraya Damrong Rachanuphap, A biography of Prince Damrong Rachanuphap (Bangkok 1965), iii, 95.

presumably hoped thereby to create an organization through which the medical officer could conveniently reach the people in the villages throughout the Kingdom.¹ He proposed to reward the sub-district doctors for their services by offering them a 10% commission on the sale of medicine.² It was probably because it was so energetic in extending the health services to the provinces that the government gradually transferred divisions in the Department of Health from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of the Interior between 1908 and 1912.

The Ministry of the Interior's implementation and development of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration at the monthon and provincial levels had certainly not reached a state of perfection by 1915. The Ministry had laid down the foundation for a centralized system of provincial administration but it could make no guarantee for the personal shortcoming of its officials. It had, for instance, to suppress monthon Phetchabun and incorporate it into monthon Phitsanulok between 1903 and 1907, because it 'could not find a superintendent commissioner who could withstand the '(malarial) fever' which infested the area.³ It also discovered that it had not

1. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.126', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1907', Thesaphiban, III (1907), 153.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Nithan Borankhadi, Historical Anecdotes (1st edn., Bangkok 1944), pp. 174-194.

3. M.33/29: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 281/10444, 26 December 1907.

completely succeeded in establishing a centralized and impersonal bureaucracy and in depersonalizing the provincial administration. In 1903, it learnt, for instance, that the deputy superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Sawan could not dismiss the idle and inept warden of the monthon gaol because the man was a protege of the monthon's superintendent commissioner.¹ Prince Damrong thought that what was still worse than the persistence of personal cliques was the Ministry's reliance upon far too few men to implement the reforms in the provinces. It took the Ministry, for instance, four years to find a worthy successor to Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Choei Kanlayanamit), who had been an efficient if ruthless superintendent commissioner of monthon Phitsanulok from 1894 to 1902. It found that the four men whom it appointed as superintendent commissioners of the monthon from 1902 to 1906 were unable to lead the monthon and provincial officials in Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat's way.²

The Ministry also discovered that some of its officials were indolent, inefficient, and corrupt. In 1903, the director of the Ministry's Provincial Administration Department (Krom Phalamphang) found, for instance, that the provincial

1. M.30/25: Chonlaburanurak to Sisahathep, 20 February 1903.

2. M.33/25: Sisahathep to Sommot, 1870/10309, 21 January 1905.

commissioner and the financial commissioner of monthon Nakhon Chaisi made no distinction between their respective responsibilities.¹ In 1907, Prince Damrong himself stopped the promotion of a public prosecutor who knew little of the affairs of his monthon.² Two years later, the Ministry dismissed a number of officials who used confidential information to buy up lands through which the Ministry of Public Works had planned to lay down railway lines.³ Above all, the Ministry found that its officials' greatest short-coming was their unwillingness to go on tours of inspection. Prince Damrong exhorted superintendent commissioners time and again to inspect their provinces, and to order governors and district officers to inspect districts, sub-districts, and villages.⁴ He realized that the superintendent commissioners and governors must direct the more junior officials if the Ministry were to be able to implement the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration at the district, sub-district, and village levels at the same time as at the monthon and provincial levels.

1. M.121/13: Intharawichit to Damrong, 13 March 1903.

2. An announcement in, Thesaphiban, IV (1907), 11-12.

3. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.128', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1909', Thesaphiban, VIII (1909), 88.89.

4. ibid., 87-88; and Krasuang Mahatthai, Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.131, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1912 (Bangkok 1912), pp. 160-161.

The district, sub-district, and
village administration.

Between 1899 and 1915, the Ministry of the Interior attempted to implement the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration at the district, sub-district, and village levels at the same time as at the monthon and provincial levels. The Ministry discovered, however, that in these cases too there was a gap between the declaration of intentions and their fulfilment in the field. It found, in other words, that the promulgation of edicts and regulations did not themselves entail the immediate implementation of reforms. It also realized that the implementation of reforms was going to be gradual and uneven in spite of the encouraging start which Phraya Sukhumnawinit (Pan Sukhum) and Phraya Ritthirong Ronnachet (Suk Chuto) had made in monthons Nakhon Sithammarat and Prachinburi.

The Ministry of the Interior discovered that the factors which impeded the implementation of reforms at the district level were approximately the same as those at the monthon and provincial levels. It also found that these factors were inter-related in approximately the same way. At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1899, Prince Damrong told his

audience that,

'From the beginning, the finding of people who possessed sufficient qualities to be district officers has presented difficulties to superintendent commissioners, and it has grown more difficult as the number of reforms increase. At the beginning, we had to depend on incumbent officials and whomever we found for district officers and had to allow them to carry on haphazardly as before. It was only if we discovered that they had committed misdemeanours or were too old for the job that we replaced them with others who could experiment (with reforms). This has been the case in every monthon.'¹

The Prince could have added that there was also a shortage of funds which meant that the Ministry could establish only a few monthons, transform only a few provincial petty noblemen into salaried district officers, and train only a few men for district officerships at a time.

The Ministry's retention of the provincial petty nobility had repercussions on every sphere of the district administration. In 1899, Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Choei Kanlayanamit), the superintendent commissioner of monthon Phitsanulok, pointed out the political effects of the retention of the provincial petty nobility on the district administration. He felt that their transformation into salaried district officers was a contradiction in terms for he saw that they merely

1. Krasuang Mahatthai, Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.118, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1899 (Bangkok 1899), p. 10.

continued to control their old groups of people.¹ He thought, in other words, that the retention of the provincial petty nobility negated the principle laid down by Prince Maruphong in 1892 according to which the Ministry aimed to cut all ties between the nobility and the common people.²

The Ministry's retention of the provincial petty nobility affected the bureaucratic efficiency of the district administration. In 1898, Prince Damrong discovered, for instance, that the members of the petty nobility of Ratburi, whom the superintendent commissioner had had to retain as district officers, preferred to live in their home-town rather than in the districts to which they had been assigned.³ The Prince knew, however, that the petty noblemen who actually resided in their districts were not necessarily competent. In 1896, Phraya Sukhumnawinit, the first superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Sithamarat, told him, for instance, that the district officers in

1. M.20/20: Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat to Damrong, 1 April 1899. Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat appeared to have been the only superintendent commissioner to have pointed out this political effect of the retention of the provincial petty nobility at the district level of the administration.

2. M.1/37: Damrong to Prasit Sanlakan, 12/1676, 20 June 1892.

3. M.9/13: Damrong to Sarit Photchanakon, 29 August 1898.

the north of Songkhla were illiterate.¹ The Prince also knew how illiteracy affected the district administration. In 1903, the Deputy Director of the Ministry's Provincial Administration Department reported to him that 'the administration, the collection, and the maintenance of various materials in the district headquarters (of monthon Nakhon Ratchasima) were disorderly.'²

The retention of the provincial petty nobility also affected the district administration's law enforcement activities. On the one hand, Prince Damrong realized in 1898 that there was a direct connection between the petty noblemen of Ratburi's residence in their home-town and the lawlessness in the province's outlying districts.³ On the other hand, the government also knew that the superintendent commissioners' initial failure to displace the provincial petty nobility meant the retention of the criminal elements among them as officials in the district administration. In 1901, Phraya Sisahathep (Seng Wirayasiri) discovered, for instance, that a member of the Bunnag family who was the district officer of Tha Yang in Phetburi in monthon Ratburi was in league with the

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1. M.32/20: Wichit Worasan to Damrong, 24/114, 11 March 1896.
 2. M.123/13: Norarat Chamnong to Damrong, 18 July 1903.
 3. M.9/13: Damrong to Sarit Photchanakon, 29 August 1898.

bandits. He learnt that the man had allowed twelve bandits to escape from the district gaol and he himself later found three of them sitting in the district headquarters.¹

Furthermore, the Ministry felt that it could not rely on the provincial petty nobility to administer the law at the district level of the judicial administration. In 1896, an inspector reported that the district officers in monthon Nakhon Ratchasima were too ignorant to administer the law and wasted a great deal of the litigants' time by having to refer most cases to the judicial commissioner at the monthon headquarters.² Ten years later, the Ministry itself admitted that most district officers were not competent to administer the law concerning divorce and land disputes.³ In 1912, Prince Thamrongsi Sithawat, the first superintendent commissioner of monthon Roi-et, discovered that some of his district officers were not only incompetent but also corrupt in their judicial administration. He found that they demanded fees before they would listen to cases and afterwards kept the fees and fines for their own pockets.⁴

1. M.3/13: Sisahathep to Chulalongkorn, 2 April 1901.

2. M.73/13 Bundle 1 Bunch 2: Phrommaphiban to Chulalongkorn, 4 September 1896.

3. 'Ruang krommakan amphoe priapthiap khwam phang', 'The District Officer and civil law', Thesaphiban, I (1906), 231-237.

4. 11/91: Thamrongsi Sithawat to Damrong, 60/11955, 25 August 1912.

The retention of the provincial petty nobility also affected the performance of the district administration's financial administration. In 1898, Prince Damrong thought that the district officers of Ratburi who resided in their home-town were not helping the government to increase the revenue from that province in any way. He saw that they merely ordered the people of their districts to come to pay their rice tax in Ratburi without any attempt to check that they had paid the right amounts.¹ Three years later, Phraya Sisahathep discovered that the district officer of the Western District of Phetburi in monthon Ratburi was energetic in collecting the water tax but did not give receipts upon its payment.² He refrained from saying whether the man was corrupt or incompetent. In 1912, Prince Thamrongsiri Sithawat found that the district officers of monthon Roi-et rarely appointed district financial officers (samuhabanch amphoe) and rarely kept accounts of the revenue and expenditure. The Prince went on to say that some of them pocketed the revenue and hoped that this would always be overlooked. He asked a district officer about a sum of 215 baht which was missing from the headquarters and received the ingenious explanation that 'the rats had taken it

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1. M.9/13: Damrong to Sarit Photchanakon, 29 August 1898.
 2. M.3/13: Sisahathep to Chulalongkorn, 2 April 1901.

away'.¹

The Ministry's retention of the provincial petty nobility affected most of all the village and sub-district levels of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. It wanted the district officer to be the agent between the central government's officials, the superintendent commissioner and governors, and the people's elected officials, the commune and village elders. The Ministry must have known, however, that it could not immediately fulfil this expectation. A year after the promulgation of the Edict, Prince Damrong himself realized that the district officers of Ratburi's residence in their home-town meant that the commune elders and the village elders in that province were left without leadership.² He could have added that they would have probably made little impact on the sub-district and village administration even if they had resided in their districts. He well knew that ignorance precluded the majority of them from being able to give advice on judicial and financial matters to the commune and village elders.

The retention of the provincial petty nobility at the district headquarters was, however, only one among many factors which impeded the implementation of reforms at the sub-district

1. 11/91: Thamrongsiri to Damrong, 60/11955, 25 August 1912.

2. M.9/13: Damrong to Sarit Photchanakon, 29 August 1898.

and village levels of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. In 1898, Phraya Sukhumnaiwinit, the superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Sithammarat, encountered opposition to the establishment of the sub-district and village administration in Nakhon Sithammarat. He reported to Prince Damrong that the nobility did not want elections of commune and village elders to be held in the province.¹ Phraya Sithammarat (Nuphrom na Nakhon) and his associates must have, in other words foreseen the revolutionary implications of the sub-district and village administration. They must have realized that the superintendent commissioner was trying to bypass their administration and to govern the countryside through the people's elected officials. They must have foreseen that the success of this system of administration entailed the destruction of their political, administrative, and social control over the people.

The Ministry discovered, however, that it faced not only political opposition but also practical impediments to the implementation of the sub-district and village administration. It found that some people actually disliked the idea of electing commune and village elders. In 1898, Phraya Sukhumnaiwinit

1. M.11/25: Sukhumnaiwinit to Damrong, 4 October 1898. Phraya Sukhumnaiwinit appeared to have been the only superintendent commissioner to have encountered the provincial nobility's opposition against the establishment of the sub-district and village administration.

reported that the people of Nakhon Sithammarat did not want to elect commune and village elders not because they had been frightened by the nobility but because they thought that it was in fact a more efficient way of organizing them for service.¹ In other words, they saw no difference between the government's new system and the provincial nobility's traditional methods of administration.

The Ministry also found that some people were apathetic and even antipathetic towards being elected commune and village elders. In 1898, Prince Maruphong reported that the people of Ayutthaya did not like being elected village elders. Unlike the people of Nakhon Sithammarat, they made their complaints after they had had the experience of being village elders. They complained that the dispensation from the payment of the commutation tax and six baht's worth of other taxes, which was worth twelve baht per year, was an inadequate remuneration for their efforts to maintain the peace, to collect, and to keep up to date cadastral and census records for the government's fiscal purposes. They also said that their voluntary participation in the new system of provincial administration prevented them from earning their livelihood.² They could have added

1. M.11/25: Sukhumnaiwinit to Damrong, 4 October 1898. Phraya Sukhumnaiwinit appeared to have been the only superintendent commissioner to have encountered the people's lack of enthusiasm towards electing commune and village elders.

2. M.35/25: Maruphong to Damrong, 104/3597, 16 September 1898.

that it also alienated them from their neighbours for it turned them into quasi-officials of the government. Some people expressed their dislike of being elected village elders in simple but effective ways. In 1896, for instance, officials reported to the King that village elders in Samut Songkhram in monthon Ratburi resigned or asked for leave to be ordained into the monkhood after only one year of service.¹ Although Prince Maruphong did say in 1898 that village elders did not mind being elected commune elders because the government more adequately remunerated the latter,² the fact remained that some people were not over-enthusiastic about elected village eldership which was after all supposed to be a part of 'the grass-roots of the administration'.³

The Ministry found that the personnel of the village and sub-district administration reflected the people's lack of enthusiasm for electing and being elected village and commune elders. Some people, who were suspicious of the new system of administration, took the easy way to resolve the predicament and elected government officials as village and commune elders.

1. M.73/13 Bundle 3: Intharathiban and Sanoe-nganpraphat to Chulalongkorn, 26 June 1896.

2. M.35/25: Maruphong to Damrong, 104/3597, 16 September 1898.

3. Phraya Kriangkrai Krabuanyut, Tamra Pokkhong, A text-book on administration i (2nd edn., Bangkok 1905), p. 116.

The Ministry learnt, for instance, that the people of one village in Ayutthaya elected Prince Maruphong and those of another village in the same province elected the Keeper of Bangpa-in Palace as their village elders.¹ A group of village elders went on to elect the Keeper of Bangpa-in Palace as their commune elder.² In 1898, Phraya Sukhumnaiwinit reported that when he had managed to persuade the people of Nakhon Sithammarat to participate in the new system of administration, they elected a judge and several other government officials as their commune and village elders.³ Although Phraya Ratchasena (Siri Thephatsadin na Ayutthaya) later wrote that Prince Maruphong made an excellent village elder,⁴ the fact remained that some people preferred not to exercise their right of self-government and to elect officials to govern them.

The Ministry also found that the people had a limited choice even when they chose to exercise their right of self-government. The Ministry's own initial failure to implement

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., p. 90: and Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Prawat Bukkhon Samkhan Chabap Sombun, The biographies of important men (Bangkok 1962), p. 241. The biography of Phraya Rattanakun Adunlayaphakdi, (Chamrat Rattanakun).

2. ibid., p. 241.

3. M.11/25: Sukhumnaiwinit to Damrong, 4 October 1898.

4. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., p. 90.

reforms at the district level meant that the villagers remained at the mercy of the local strong men. In 1902, Phraya Sisahathep (Seng Wirayasiri) reported to the Royal Secretariat that one village elder in the district of Pakthongchai in Nakhon Ratchasima was the master-mind behind a gang of bandits and a general receiver of stolen goods.¹ Later in the same year, Phraya Kraiphet Rattanasongkhram (Chae Bunnag), the second superintendent commissioner of monthom Nakhon Sawan, reported to Prince Damrong that a commune elder in the district of Khanu in Kamphaengphet was a drunken bully.²

The Ministry discovered, however, that even when it did manage to supervise the village and sub-district administration, some people in fact abused their right of self-government. In 1899, Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat reported to Prince Damrong that the people of monthom Phitsanulok 'for the most parts knowingly chose people with neither following nor ability' to be their village elders.³ At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1904, Phraya Suntharaburi (Chom Suntharanchun) told his colleagues that the people of monthom Nakhon Chaisi

1. M.12/25: Sisahathep to Sommot, 1155/10913, 8 February 1902.

2. M.30/25: Kraiphet Rattanasongkhram to Damrong, 61/827, 16 June 1902.

3. M.20/20: Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat to Damrong, 1 April 1899.

'usually chose poor married men to be their village elders'.¹ Although Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat and Phraya Suntharaburi added no further words of comment, it is reasonable to suggest that the government might have succeeded in bypassing the provincial nobility's traditional system of administration by establishing the new village and sub-district administration, but that the latter was sometimes rendered nugatory by the people's election of ineffectual village and commune elders which weakened not only the provincial nobility's but also the government's administration of the countryside.

The Ministry certainly felt the effects which the quality of the village and commune elders had on the village and sub-district administration. It found that the village and commune elders' weakness adversely affected their law enforcement capacity. In 1896, inspectors reported to the King that some of the village and commune elders in monthon Ratburi were 'afraid of being shot by the villagers because it is to this day quite common to shoot people for revenge in this area'.² Six years later, Phraya Sisahathep explained to the Royal Secretariat that,

1. M.11/6: Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.123, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1904, typescript, p.149.

2. M.73/13 Bundle 3: Intharathiban and Sanoe-nganpraphat to Chulalongkorn, 10 June 1896.

'The reason for the increase in banditry (in monthon Nakhon Ratchasima) was because the commune and village elders...did not tell the officials about the bandits even if they knew who they were and what crimes they had committed for they feared the power of the bandits more than that of the government.'¹

In 1905, Phraya Kamhaeng Songkhram (Chan Intharakamhaeng), the third superintendent commissioner of Nakhon Ratchasima, admitted that some of the village and commune elders in his monthon were 'in collusion with the bandits'.²

The Ministry found that some of the village and commune elders were not only weak but also ignorant and incompetent. The Ministry's officials complained time and again of their ignorance. In 1896, officials in monthon Ratburi reported to the King that 'some of the commune and village elders did not yet have a thorough knowledge of their functions..., because... they were either illiterate or uninterested'.³ Eleven years later in 1907, Phraya Sakseni (Na Bunnag), the first superintendent commissioner of monthon Pattani, thought that the commune and village elders in the district of Betong in Yala usually did not know what they were supposed to do.⁴ The

1. M.12/25: Sisahathep to Sommot, 1155/10913, 8 February 1902.

2. M.12/25: Kamhaeng Songkhram to Damrong, 232/1031, 1 September 1905.

3. M.73/13 Bundle 3: Intharathiban and Sanoe-nganpraphat to Chulalongkorn, 10 June 1896.

4. Phraya Sakseni, 'Rai-ngan Phraya Sakseni pai truat ratchakan thang amphoe Betong lae muang Itam', 'A report on the district of Betong and the Itam mines', Thesaphiban, IV (1907), 85-110.

Ministry realized that the village and commune elders' ignorance directly affected their administrative competence. In 1903, it learnt, for instance, that they were not competent to help in the first methodical census taken in twelve of the monthons because they were either illiterate and could not fill in the forms or literate but confused by the forms.¹ In the same year, the deputy superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Sawan substantiated this general accusation by describing how the census forms were passed from one level of the administration to another until they 'got stuck at the village elders who caused the delays because they were unable to do them'.²

The Ministry found that the ignorance of the commune and village elders also affected their participation in the judicial administration. In 1896, inspectors in monthon Nakhon Chaisi reported to the King that a commune elder in Suphanburi abused his judicial authority by arbitrarily imprisoning people and only releasing them upon payment of ransoms.³ After such an inauspicious beginning, it is hardly surprising that ten years later an article should appear in the fourth issue of the Thesaphiban journal which said that the people rarely resorted

1. 'Ruang tham sammanokhrua huamuang', 'Census Survey in the provinces', Thesaphiban, I (1906), 85.

2. M.30/25: Chonlaburanurak to Sisahathep, 20 February 1903.

3. M.73/13 Bundle 3: Intharathiban and Sanoe-nganpraphat to Chulalongkorn, 22 April 1896.

to commune elders but preferred to go to district officers for judicial settlements.¹ The Ministry also found that the village and commune elders' ignorance affected their participation in the financial administration. In 1901, F.H. Giles, the English Director of the Provincial Revenue Department, reported to Prince Damrong that the commune elders in monthon Nakhon Chaisi were not fully competent at taking cadastral surveys and helping to collect the rice tax. He did, however, take some of the blame on his own department by saying that the revenue commissioner and officers had probably not given them a thorough instruction.²

Between 1899 and 1915, the Ministry of the Interior tried its best to improve gradually the quality of the village and commune elders. The Ministry could not wait for the long-term results of the introduction of compulsory elementary education in the countryside but took its own measures to educate the village and commune elders. From 1902 onwards, the governor of Samut Songkhram in monthon Ratburi, for instance, examined his village and commune elders on their knowledge of their powers and responsibilities. In 1904, he reported to Prince Damrong that in 1903 over half of one group of village and

1. 'Ruang krommakan amphoe priapthiap khwam phaeng', The District Officer and civil law', Thesaphiban, I (1906), 231-237.

2. M.120/13: Giles to Damrong, 25 March 1901.

commune elders passed their examination.¹ The Ministry also gave additional incentives to commune and village elders in order to encourage them to perform their duties. In 1902, the public prosecutor of Phetchabun took a number of village and commune elders to receive merit medals from the Ministry.² In 1904, the Ministry authorized Prince Maruphong to give monetary rewards to meritorious village and commune elders in monthon Prachinburi.³

At the same time, the Ministry reduced the number of village and commune elders and presumably hoped to use the reduction as a means of indirectly improving the quality of the village and sub-district administration. At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1904, Prince Damrong told his audience that there were too many village elders in the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. He asked them to abandon in future the principle that a village must consist approximately of ten households and a hundred inhabitants and to substitute the idea that a village was defined by natural features and consist of two to three hundred inhabitants.⁴ The

1. M.19/25: Ratchaphongsanurak to Damrong, 10/1218, 4 July 1904.

2. M.190/51: Damrong to Sommot, 354/7843, 18 October 1902.

3. 'Laksana kan hai rangwan kamnan phuyai-ban', 'Rewards for commune and village elders', Thesaphiban, I (1906), 301-303.

4. M.11/6: Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s. 123, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1904, typescript, p. 28.

Ministry presumably could then indirectly improve the quality of the village and sub-district administration because it would be better able to educate and reward the village and commune elders whose number would be kept down as a result of the scheme's implementation.

Between 1899 and 1915, the Ministry of the Interior concentrated, however, on improving gradually the quality of the district administration. This was a logical step to take in view of the fact that the Ministry must have good officials at the district level if it wanted them to be the agents between the government's officials and the people's elected officials. The Ministry had first of all to impose a greater control over the provincial petty nobility whom it had had to retain as district officers. It used the same method to do this at the district as at the provincial level of the Thesaphiban system of administration. After his tour of inspection of 1898, Prince Damrong prepared, for instance, to send a deputy district officer (palat amphoe) to monthon Ratburi.¹ He presumably hoped that his deputy district officer would then keep a close watch on the district officer and initiate as many reforms as possible at his own discretion.

The Ministry also gradually displaced the provincial petty

1. M.9/13: Damrong to Sarit Photchanakon, 29 August 1898.

nobility from the district administration during this period. It first of all used a subtle method to weaken their basis of political power. In 1896, Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Choei Kanlayanamit) succeeded, for instance, in separating the provincial petty nobility from their old groups of common people by completely redemarcating the boundaries of the districts in monthon Phitsanulok.¹ The Ministry also gently dislodged some of them from the district administration. In 1901, Phraya Woradet Sakdawut (Chek Charuchinda), the second superintendent commissioner of monthon Ratburi, retired on a pension the district officer of Ratburi who was seventy years old.² Six years later, Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Pho Netipho), the second superintendent commissioner of monthon Udon, pensioned off the district officer of Kamutthasai who was seventy-six years old and completely blind.³ Furthermore, the Ministry used harsh methods to displace some of the provincial petty nobility whom it had had to retain as officials in the district administration. In 1898, Prince Maruphong dismissed and imprisoned a number of inefficient and corrupt district officers in monthon Ayutthaya.⁴

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1. M.20/20: Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat to Damrong, 1 April 1898.
 2. M.3/13: Sisahathep to Chulalongkorn, 2 April 1901.
 3. M.195/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 15/742, 25 April 1907.
 4. M.35/25: Maruphong to Damrong, 104/3597, 16 September 1898.

Four years later Phraya Kraiphet Rattanasongkhram (Chae Bunnag), the second superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Sawan, sent a district officer and a deputy district officer for trial in Kamphaengphet for negligence of duty.¹

The Ministry replaced the petty nobility who had been district officers with members of the metropolitan and provincial nobility. It sent, for instance, a number of graduates (mahatlek) of the Civil Service School (rongrian mahatlek luang) to take over district officerships in various monthons. It also sent a few army officers and junior members of the royal family to take over a number of district officerships in the hope that it would presumably endow that office with military and royal authority.² The Ministry probably replaced, however, the majority of the petty nobility who had been district officers with members of the provincial nobility.³ It appointed provincial noblemen whom it had displaced from the three most senior positions in the provincial headquarters (the deputy governorship, the public prosecutorship, and the

1. M.30/25: Kraiphet Rattanasongkhram to Damrong, 61/827, 16 June 1902.

2. In September of 1915, the Ministry listed eight graduates of the Civil Service School, five army officers, two Princes (mom chao), three mom ratchawongs, and two mom luangs among its 316 district officers. Krasuang Mahatthai, Thamniap kharatchakan krasuang mahatthai lae huamuang mesayon thung kanyayon ph.s.2458, A list of officials between April and September 1915 (Bangkok 1915), p. 16 et. passim.

3. I wish to say that here too my estimate for the proportion of the provincial and the petty nobility at the district level is based on my previous impressions of the effects which the implementation of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration had on the social status of the provincial nobility.

revenue officership) to district officerships. In 1905, for instance, it transferred the deputy governor of Angthong in monthon Ayutthaya to be the district officer of Ban Pong in monthon Ratburi.¹ Seven years later, it appointed the deputy governor of Sawankhalok in monthon Phitsanulok to be the district officer of Phum in the same monthon.²

The Ministry then had a careful but flexible and practical policy of recruiting and training a new generation of the petty nobility for junior posts in the district administration. At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1905, Prince Damrong told his audience that,

'The places to look for men in the provinces are the government schools and the monasteries. Governors and district officers, on their tours of inspection through the countryside, should consciously look for polite, quick-witted, clever men in these places, persuade as many of them as possible to join the administration, and train them as clerks. In this way, we will soon be able to choose some of them as deputy district officers and to promote them to higher positions in the administration.'³

The Prince's statement meant that the Ministry did not mind recruiting 'polite, quick-witted, and clever' government school and monastery-educated petty noblemen as officials of

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1. M.193/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 135/5526, 19 September 1905.
 2. M.201/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 25/481, 19 April 1912.
 3. M.13/6: Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.124, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1905, typescript, p. 14.

the district administration, because by 1905 it was slowly but firmly destroying the concept of the district officership as a means by which the petty nobility controlled groups of the common people. In any case, he insisted that they must receive training as clerks and thus start their career at the very bottom of the civil service.

At the same time, the Ministry introduced organizational changes as another means of improving the district administration. At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1904, Prince Damrong told his audience that in his experience district officers did not have sufficient time to go on tours of inspection. He asked superintendent commissioners to appoint in future two instead of one deputy district officers, the senior of whom was to be called the deputy district officer of the right (palat khwa) and the junior the deputy district officer of the left (palat sai). The deputy district officer of the right was given the same powers as the district officer, but the deputy district officer of the left was merely placed in charge of the clerical work of the district headquarters. The district officer and deputy district officer of the right could then take turns to go on tours of inspection without dislocating the work of the district headquarters.¹ At the

1. M.11/6: Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.123, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1904, typescript, pp. 17-21.

meeting of the superintendent commissioners in the following year, Prince Damrong told his audience to adapt these two institutions to the new recruiting policy of the district administration. They were to tell district officers to appoint clerks in the district headquarters as deputy district officers of the left and to promote them to being deputy district officers of the right. The superintendent commissioners could then promote deputy district officers of the right to full district officerships or to even higher positions and thereby provide incentives for ambitious local people to join the administration.¹ At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1906, Prince Damrong presented another scheme for the improvement of the district administration. He asked his audience to establish branches of district headquarters (king amphoe) in outlying parts which district officers could not visit twice a month. He hoped that the superintendent commissioners, governors, and district officers would then be in closer contact with more of the people in the countryside.²

Between 1899 and 1915, the Ministry of the Interior concentrated its attention above all on education of the officials

1. M.13/6: Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.124, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1905, typescript, p. 12.

2. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.125', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1906', Thesaphiban, II (1906), 48-49.

at the district headquarters as the most effective means of improving the district administration. At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1899, Prince Damrong asked Prince Maruphong to make available to the other superintendent commissioners the facilities of the District Administration School of Ayutthaya. The Ministry would then offer scholarships to three candidates from each of the fourteen monthons already established by 1899 to go to study district administration in Ayutthaya. It added that it could unfortunately offer only up to fifty scholarships in any one year but that candidates who had their own financial resources could proceed to be examined on their knowledge at the School. Prince Damrong also told his audience about Prince Maruphong's curriculum, which consisted of courses in reading and writing, arithmetic, and knowledge and practice of the edicts and regulations of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. Prince Damrong lent extra authority to this project by adding that no official in the district administration would in future be ennobled unless he had a diploma of graduation from Prince Maruphong's School.¹

Three years later, the Ministry had, however, to modify

1. Krasuang Mahatthai, Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.118, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1899 (Bangkok 1899), pp.10-12.

its original scheme for the education of officials for the district administration. It probably felt that, at the district as at the provincial level of the administration, it could not afford to lose the services of officials whom it sent to attend the District Administration School at Ayutthaya.

It probably also found that the production of district officers in the School did not keep pace with the expansion of the district administration. At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1902, Prince Damrong told his audience to use the officials in the monthon headquarters as teachers in district administration schools which should be established in the headquarters of the districts of their residence. They should then summon members of the provincial petty nobility whom they had had to retain in the district headquarters to study and to practice the edicts and regulations of the new district administration. They should also form committees to examine the students and to send graduates back to their districts as deputy district officers.¹

In 1903, the Ministry altered its modified scheme for the education of officials for the district headquarters. At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in that year, Prince Damrong told his audience that the Ministry could not

1. Krasuang Mahatthai, Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.121, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1902 (Bangkok 1902), pp. 7-10.

afford to lose the services of officials whom it was using as teachers and whom it was sending to attend courses at the monthon district administration schools. He told them to adopt the method which Prince Maruphong had pioneered in monthon Ayutthaya for the education of the district as well as the provincial officials. He planned to make a provincial or provincial petty nobleman also serve an apprenticeship (samrong rat-chakan) and to give him the Golden Book (samut langthong) of edicts and regulations concerning the administration. He proposed, however, to make the apprenticeship more difficult for the district than for the provincial official. The superintendent commissioner should appoint an apprentice as a deputy district officer only after he was sure that the man was proficient in all branches of the administration. He should raise his salary only after he had again examined him on his knowledge and promote him to a full district officership only after a third examination.¹

In the following years, the Ministry made further alterations to its educational scheme for officials in the district administration. By 1907, Prince Damrong must have felt that he had made the apprenticeship and promotion of the deputy district officers and district officers too difficult. At the

1. M.10/6: Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.122, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1903, typescript, pp. 362-373.

meeting of the superintendent commissioners in that year, he allowed superintendent commissioners to appoint apprentices as deputy district officers as soon as they were sure that they were proficient in one branch of the administration. They should, however, promote them to district officerships only after they knew that they were proficient in all branches of the administration. They should promote them to important district officerships only after the Ministry had examined them on their knowledge of the administration.¹ Prince Damrong must have soon felt, however, that he had now made the apprenticeship and the promotion of deputy district officers and district officers too easy. At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1914, he told his audience to appoint apprentices not only as deputy district officers but also as district financial officers (samphabanchi amphoe) only after they knew that they were proficient in all branches of the administration. Furthermore, they should also test the apprentices on their knowledge of the local topography, and should finally recruit only those with good manners.²

By 1914, the Ministry of the Interior probably felt, how-

1. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.126', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1907', Thesaphiban, IV (1907), 130-136.

2. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban ph.s.2457', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1914', Thesaphiban, XIX (1915), 66-71.

ever, that it had still not fully implemented the government's Edict concerning district administration of 1897. The Ministry had not, in other words, closed the gap between the declaration of intentions and their fulfilment in the field. This predicament was partly resolved when the government promulgated the Edict concerning district administration of 1914.¹ In this Edict, the Ministry indirectly admitted that it had perhaps set its sights too high in 1897 and that it wanted to modify some of its aims in the light of the experience which it had acquired during seventeen years of trying to implement and to develop the village, sub-district, and district administration. It retained the feasible aspects and modified the over-ambitious features of the Edict concerning district administration of 1897. At the village level, the government merely codified the decision which was reached at the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1904 whereby the Ministry of the Interior decided to define the village on the basis not of the number of inhabitants but of the natural features of the locality. At the sub-district level, the government used the occasion to enlarge the area of the sub-district so that it would correspond to the new definition of the village. It now decided that

1. 'Phraratchabanyat pokkhong thongthi ph.s.2457', 'The Edict concerning district administration of 1914', RKB, XXXI part I (1914), 229-274.

a sub-district should consist of approximately twenty villages. It also allowed commune elders to hold only one instead of two meetings of village elders per month.

The government both introduced reforms and codified decisions which the Ministry of the Interior had already taken at the district level in the Edict concerning district administration of 1914. It enlarged the district so that it would correspond to the new definitions of the village and sub-district. It now defined the size of a district by the natural features of the locality. It also codified the decision reached at the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1906 whereby the Ministry of the Interior decided to create branch district headquarters in outlying areas which district officers could not visit twice a month. Above all, the government used the occasion to introduce reforms concerning the judicial powers of the district officers. It indirectly admitted that it had perhaps given too much judicial powers to district officers in 1897. The Ministry of the Interior certainly had evidence that some district officers were incapable of settling disputes let alone of adjudicating complex civil cases which could have involved the maximum sum of a thousand baht. the government therefore reduced the district officers' judicial powers and allowed them to judge civil cases the maximum value of which was fixed henceforth at only two hundred baht.

The Ministry of the Interior had, however, no more perfected the Thesaphiban system of administration at the village, sub-district, and district levels than at the provincial and monthon levels by 1915. Its implementation of reforms at the lower three levels might have even lagged behind that at the upper two levels of the system. The Ministry could have excused itself in several ways. First of all, it had only been able to establish only a few monthons at a time between 1893 and 1915. Secondly, when it did manage to establish the monthons, it had to implement and to develop the new system of administration at the monthon and provincial levels before it could begin to do the same things at the village, sub-district, and district levels. Phraya Satchaphirom (Suang Siphen) later wrote that he was, for instance, the first governor of Uthaithani in monthon Nakhon Sawan to visit two of the districts in the province.¹ Thirdly, the Ministry's projects to improve the quality of the officials at the three lower levels of the administration depended in the long run on the country's elementary and secondary education the development of which had only commenced in the provinces in 1898. Finally, it could give no guarantees for the personal short-comings of its officials at these or at any other level of the administration.

1. Phraya Satchaphirom Udomratchaphakdi (Suang Siphen), op.cit., pp. 148-149.

Phraya Satchaphirom later wrote that the officer of one of the two districts in Uthaithani, which he was the first governor to visit in 1918, could not withstand the malarial fever which was prevalent in the area and lived instead in the provincial town.¹

The Ministry of the Interior could nevertheless claim that it had laid the foundation for a centralized provincial administration between 1892 and 1915. By 1915, it had succeeded in imposing the Thesaphiban system of administration over not only the former inner provinces but also the former outer provinces and tributary states. Chao Phraya Surasi Wisitsak (Choei Kanlayanamit) the High Commissioner of monthon Phayap, took over the district administration of the former tributary state of Chiangmai in as efficient a way as he had earlier demonstrated in monthon Phitsanulok. By 1915, he had displaced the Chiangmai royalty from all but one of the fifteen districts in the principality.² Phraya Sithammasokkarat (Piu Bunnag), had an equal success in Ubonratchathani. He displaced the petty nobility from all but one of the twelve districts in the province.³ The Ministry could then hope that its district

1. ibid., p. 152.

2. Krasuang Mahatthai, Thamniap kharatchakan krasuang mahatthai lae huamuang mesayon thung kanyayon ph.s.2458, A list of officials between April and September 1915 (Bangkok 1915), p. 132.

3. ibid., p. 216.

officers would be able to give the village and commune elders the leadership and supervision which they had hitherto lacked. It could also rely more and more on the provincial officials to lead and to supervise the district officials and the village and commune elders. In 1918, Phraya Satchaphirom, the governor of Uthaithani, the deputy governor, the commander of the provincial gendarmerie, the provincial revenue officer, the medical officer, and twenty-five other officials proceeded on a tour of inspection of the province.¹ As he travelled through the countryside, Phraya Satchaphirom must have thought that the provincial administration which he inspected was far different from the one which he joined in 1883 in spite of its manifest and manifold short-comings.

1. Phraya Satchaphirom Udomratchaphakdi (Suang Siphon), op.cit., pp. 150-151.

Chapter VI

The achievements of the Ministry of the Interior,
1892-1915.

On the 6th August 1915, Prince Damrong submitted his resignation to King Wachirawut.¹ This event had both immediate and far-reaching significance. It was, first of all, a momentous event because Prince Damrong had been the Minister of the Interior for over twenty-three years. The Prince's submission of resignation posed certain questions concerning the nature of Siamese politics under the Absolute Monarchy. It also had short and long-term effects on the Ministry of the Interior and the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. Furthermore, it marked the end of a clearly defined era and raised the need to assess the achievements, the failures, and the implications for modern Siam of Prince Damrong's Ministry of the Interior and the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration.

1. 22/52 Bunch 1: Damrong to Wachirawut, 6 August 1915.

The resignation of Prince Damrong.

King Wachirawut accepted Prince Damrong's resignation on the 7th August 1915.¹ In the official announcement, the Prince stated that ill-health was the reason for his resignation.² This statement, which might appear reasonable enough, was nevertheless unsatisfactory within the context of Siamese politics under the Absolute Monarchy. It seemed odd, in other words, that the half-brother of King Chulalongkorn should have resigned from his own nephew's government. It is, however, only on first appearance that Prince Damrong's resignation seemed sudden and unexpected, for, in reality, it was the climax of a chain of events. These events took place over a number of years and their common theme was the basic incompatibility between the Prince and King Wachirawut. The evidence for this mutual incompatibility is necessarily scanty but it is possible to demonstrate its existence by inferring from certain events which took place between 1909 and 1915.

King Wachirawut had indeed many reasons to dislike Prince Damrong. They belonged, first of all, to different genera-

1. 22/52 Bunch 1: Damrong to Wachirawut, 7 August 1915.

2. 'Prakat ruang Krom Phra Damrong Rachanuphap song la ok chak tannaeng senabodi Krasuang Mahatthai', 'An announcement concerning the resignation of Prince Damrong from being the Minister of the Interior', RKB (Legislative Section), xxxii (1915), 143.

tions. In 1910, when the King ascended the throne he was thirty years old. By that time, the Prince had reached the age of forty-eight. Although their difference in age was minimal, their difference in experience was enormous. On the one hand, Prince Damrong had become a Cabinet Minister at the age of thirty and had reached maturity through a period of great political instability when the monarchy and the Kingdom had had to struggle against internal and external forces in order to survive as sovereign entities. King Wachirawut, on the other hand, had grown up when the vital issues of the day had been decided and only the details remained to be settled. In other words, there was an earnestness and urgency about the Prince's generation, which was basically incompatible with the security and light-heartedness of the King's generation.

Apart from the basic difference in generations, King Wachirawut probably also disliked Prince Damrong for political reasons. The King's dislike for Prince Damrong fell, on the one hand, in the context of the politics of succession under an Absolute Monarchy whereby a new monarch usually disdained to govern the country through his predecessor's ministers, dismissed or forced them to resign, and appointed his friends and followers to the vacant offices of state. In 1910, King Wachirawut had inherited not only his father's throne but also his father's Cabinet. In the following years, the King

managed to divest himself of most of the twelve ministers of his original cabinet. He accepted the resignation of two ministers in 1910, four in 1912, one in 1913, and one in 1920.¹ He then appointed his friends and followers to the vacant offices of state. His acceptance of Prince Damrong's resignation in 1915 and his appointment of the High Commissioner of monthon Phayap, Chao Phraya Surasi Wisitsak (Choei Kanlayanamit), as the new Minister of the Interior fell into the pattern of this political context. On the other hand, the King probably simply resented the Prince's position in the cabinet. By 1910, Prince Damrong was the most powerful minister in the government. The Prince, far from being the mere 'secretary' that King Chulalongkorn had designated him in 1892, had by then become the acknowledged 'Lord Programme-maker' for the monarchy.² He had become not merely the 'fourth or fifth King' in the cabinet but the de facto 'prime minister' of the government.³

1. D.K. Wyatt, 'The Beginnings of Modern Education in Thailand, 1868 to 1910', (Cornell Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1966), pp. 657-659, Appendix A. King Wachirawut retained only three members of his original cabinet, Prince Nakhon Sawan, the Minister for the Navy, Prince Thewawong, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Chao Phraya Yommarat (Pan Sukhum), the Minister of the Metropolis.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Nithan Borankhadi, Historical Anecdotes (1st edn., Bangkok 1944), pp. 16-17. The King gave the Prince this sobriquet in 1890 and made him the 'programme-maker for royal tours in the provinces.

3. Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Seng Wirayasiri), 'Ruang Mahatthai', 'On the Ministry of the Interior' in Krasuang Mahatthai, Anuson nuang nai ngan chalong wan thi raluk sathapana Krasuang Mahatthai khrop rop hoksip pi boribun, Commemorative volume on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the foundation of the Ministry of the Interior (Bangkok 1952), p. 93.

His administrative empire embraced not only the provincial but also many other branches of the administration. The King's problem was to find some way or other to persuade this over-powerful minister to resign.

King Wachirawut began to make Prince Damrong's position insecure several years before the Prince actually submitted his resignation from the government. The King introduced administrative changes which could have appeared to cast aspersions upon the Prince's abilities. In 1909, when he was still Crown Prince, he recommended that the Ministry of the Interior should return one of its subsidiary departments, the Mines Department, to the ministry to which it had originally belonged, the Ministry of Agriculture. He made it seem then that the Mines Department, while under the Ministry of the Interior, had confined itself to bureaucratic work, had no hope of expansion and no potentials for prospecting for new mineral deposits to enrich the Kingdom's resources.¹ In the following year, as soon as he had ascended the throne, the King took over the management of the Royal Pages School from the Ministry of the Interior. On this occasion, he implied that the School should not have benefited only the Ministry of the Interior but the whole of the civil service.² The King's take-over of the Royal Pages School in

1. See supra, p. 231.

2. See supra, p. 239.

1910 coincided with his acceptance of two of his ministers' resignations and seems in retrospect calculated to irritate the Prince.

King Wachirawut continued to make Prince Damrong feel uneasy about his position in the government in the first few years of his reign. In 1912, the King and the Prince clashed over two issues. In May of that year, the King wrote to chide the Prince about his Ministry's bureaucratic procedures in these terms,

'In these days, it is rather usual for me to learn about your requests to transfer officials from monthon to monthon and from province to province from the newspapers. I therefore feel that if we are to continue to work together in this way, it will not be necessary for officials to inform me about such matters, because I will learn about them anyway from the newspapers. There are probably good gossips in several places who are ever-waiting to collect news for the papers, and that is why we are unable to keep anything secret. I will grant you your request this time, but if I continue to learn about things from the newspapers, I ask you to understand that I will not tolerate it.'¹

Five months later, the Prince in turn indirectly rebuked the King about his private para-military organization, the Wild Tiger Corp (Sua Pa). He published in the official organ of the Ministry of the Interior, the Thesaphiban Journal, an account of a tour of inspection of monthon Ubonratchathani in 1912 during the course of which the deputy superintendent

1. M.201/51: Wachirawut to Damrong, 18/135, 13 May 1912.

commissioner had forced eight officials to join the Corp. He then commented pointedly in a footnote that he thought the Corp was supposed to be raised on a voluntary basis.¹ It is more than likely that this footnote would have been brought to the attention of the King. The coincidence of these barbed interchanges with the King's acceptance of four more ministers' resignations in 1912 must have contributed to worsen the already strained relationship between him and the Prince.

King Wachiwarut's final clash with Prince Damrong took place in 1914. The clash occurred over a specific issue of governmental policy. For a number of years, the King had wanted to equip the navy with a large, sophisticated, and expensive type of warship of the 'scout cruiser' class. He failed, however, to raise the necessary sum from the budget to purchase it and suggested in 1914 that there should be a collection throughout the Kingdom of subscriptions towards its cost. The Prince apparently opposed both the necessity for such an advanced warship and the idea of the nation-wide collection of subscriptions for its purchase. In January of 1915, when it became clear that neither side was going to change its stand on the matter, the Prince asked the King for six months' sick

1. Phra Phiromracha, 'Rai-ngan Phra Phiromracha truat kan amphoe nai changwat Ubon', 'The Districts of Ubon', Thesaphiban, xiv (1912), 9.

leave.¹ When this request was immediately granted, the Prince must have felt and feared that this time the clash was irrevocable. He tried to reverse the situation by asking Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Seng Wirayasiri), his trusted Deputy Minister, to present to the King reports on the activities of the Ministry of the Interior which would justify both his previous tenure of and his continuing in office as Minister.² When these reports failed to move the King, the Prince then submitted his resignation from the government.

King Wachirawut began to dismantle Prince Damrong's bureaucratic empire almost as soon as he had accepted the Prince's resignation. The King divested the Ministry of the Interior of one of its central departments and all of its subsidiary departments. He then transferred or returned them to ministries with which they naturally were or had originally been connected. In

1. P.R.O., Foreign Office Papers, Series 371, Vol. 2462: Lyle to Grey, 14 January 1915. After the resignation of Prince Damrong, a collection throughout the Kingdom of subscriptions was organized, but the amount of money obtained was sufficient to purchase only a destroyer. A model of this destroyer, which was named Phra Ruang, can be seen today at the Imperial War Museum in London.

2. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 1, 30 Jan. 1915.
 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 2, 5 Feb. 1915.
 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 3, 27 Feb. 1915.
 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 4, 23 March 1915.
 These four reports formed the basis for Chapter IV of this Thesis.

this way, he transferred the Penitentiary Division in the Legal Department and the Provincial Gendarmerie Department to the Ministry of the Metropolis. He transferred the Legal Department itself and the Criminal Investigation Department to the Ministry of Justice. He returned the Forestry Department and the Provincial Revenue Department respectively to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Finance.¹ Furthermore, he established the Health Department as a new and independent Ministry of Health.²

King Wachirawut also made changes in Prince Damrong's Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. Five months after his acceptance of the Prince's resignation, the King issued the Announcement concerning the duties and powers of Viceroys of the 13th December 1915.³ According to this Announcement, the country was to be divided into regions (phak), over which were to be placed Viceroys (Upparat) who were to be

1. The Provincial Revenue Department was restored to the Ministry of Finance on the 2nd September 1915, and was the first of the subsidiary departments to be returned to its former ministry. 'Prakat yok Krom Sanphakon Nok ma khun Krasuang Phrakhleng Maha sombat lae ruam kap Krom Sanphakon Nai plian nam pen Krom Sanphakon', 'An announcement concerning the transfer of the Provincial Revenue Department to the Ministry of Finance, its unification to the Metropolitan Revenue Department, and the changing of their name to the Revenue Department, 2nd September 1915', Thesaphiban, xx (1915), 1-2.

2. W.A. Graham, Siam (London, 1924), i, 329.

3. 'Prakat wa duai nathi lae amnat Upparat', 'An announcement concerning the duties and powers of Upparat', Thesaphiban, xxi (1916) 89-90.

appointed by the King. The superintendent commissioners were to remain at their posts but they were to consult with the Viceroys before they undertook to deal with any emergency or any matter not covered by existing edicts and regulations, before they submitted annual accounts of their monthons' revenue and expenditure to the Ministry, and before they appointed, transferred, promoted, recommended for decorations, demoted, or dismissed officials upwards from the rank of district officer. In that year, the King placed two Viceroys over the Phayap Region which consisted of monthons Phayap and Maharat, and the Western Region (Phak Tawan-tok) which consisted of monthons Nakhon Chaisi and Ratburi. In 1916 and 1922, he placed Viceroys respectively over the Southern Region (Phak Tai) which consisted of monthons Chumphon, Nakhon Sithammarat, and Pattani, and the Isan Region which consisted of monthons Roi-et, Ubonratchathani, Udonthani.¹

King Wachirawut did not, however, dismantle Prince Damrong's bureaucratic empire and change the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration merely for spite. These reforms were intended, on the one hand, both to benefit the King and to improve the administration. The transfer and the return of

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena (Siri Thephatsadin na Ayutthaya), Thesaphiban, The Thesaphiban system of provincial administration (2nd edn., Bangkok 1960), pp.111-112.

departments to ministries with the work of which they had originally been or naturally were connected restored the strict functional differentiation which had been the original aim of King Chulalongkorn. The appointment of the Viceroys did strengthen the King's influence and weakened the superintendent commissioners' patronage of appointments and disciplinary powers, but it also brought about the closer supervision of the superintendent commissioners and the elimination or reduction of ill-considered correspondence.¹

On the other hand, King Wachirawut's reforms led, however, to a great dislocation in the provincial administration. The King's transfer of one of the central departments and all of the subsidiary departments of the Ministry of the Interior to the other ministries had repercussions which reached far into the provinces. In 1921, the governor of Chainat in monthon Nakhon ~~Savan~~ wrote directly to the King to complain that 'governors and superintendent commissioners have these days no real power whatsoever', because,

'Junior officials do not understand the royal policy and think that the Minister of the Interior's stocks have fallen and that he has lost power. They therefore set themselves up not as assistants to the governor but as the guardians of the interests of the

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., pp. 109-113. Phraya Ratchasena emphasized especially this latter point as a positive contribution of the Viceregal system of provincial administration to the Ministry of the Interior.

ministries to which they had been transferred, until they have been named 'consuls' all over the country. If they do not like some things, they complain to their ministers, who in turn rebuke the governor about them at great lengths. ...They are unwilling to do anything which does not fall directly under their responsibility, but even if something does, it is difficult to make them do it if they do not agree about it with the governor. ...Lastly, the fact that one ministry does not consult with other ministries if it wants something done causes a great deal of mutual inconvenience.'¹

The governor then begged the King to give him and his colleagues greater powers over the officials of the other ministries by enabling them to reward and to discipline them on the grounds that they were responsible for all aspects of the provincial administration.

King Wachirawut heeded the complaint about the dislocation of the provincial administration which had been caused by his reforms and restored a great deal of power to the Ministry of the Interior and the superintendent commissioners. In 1922, the King suppressed the Ministry of the Metropolis and placed the administration of 'Greater Bangkok' under the Ministry of the Interior.² He transferred the Ministry's responsibility for state penitentiaries to the Ministry of Justice, but joined its Department of Public Prosecution to the Legal Department of

1. 4/91: Thukthawin Suksawat to Wachirawut, 6 July 1921.

2. 'Greater Bangkok' consisted of Bangkok and Thonburi, and the provinces of Nonthaburi, Prathumthani, and Samutprakan.

the Ministry of Justice, and then returned this enlarged Legal Department to the Ministry of the Interior. He also returned the Provincial Gendarmerie Department to the Ministry of the Interior. He thereby restored the control over the monthon and provincial public prosecutors and provincial gendarmes to the Ministry of the Interior, the superintendent commissioners, and the governors.¹ In the same year, the King restored a great deal of disciplinary powers to the superintendent commissioners. He now allowed them to promote and to demote all officials upwards from the rank of deputy district officer. He also gave governors the power to demote all officials from the rank of deputy district officer to that of deputy governor. District officers were empowered, at the same time, to demote all officials who were junior to them.²

It was, however, not long after King Wachirwaut's reforms of 1922 that the government began slowly to dismantle both his Viceregal and Prince Damrong's Thesaphiban systems of provincial administration. The systems fell as the casualties of the First World War and the Great Slump. The process had in fact

1. 15/26: Prakat ruam kan pokkhong thongthi lae baengpan nathi ratchakan rawang Krasuang Mahatthai kap Krasuang Yuttiham, An Announcement concerning unification of administration and division of responsibilities between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice, 1 August 1922.

2. 'Kho Bangkhap laksana pokkhong huamuang chua khrao ph.s. 2465', 'Temporary regulations concerning provincial administration of 1922', RKB (Special Issue), xxxix (1922), 102.

started as early as 1915, when the government, feeling probably that it had to reduce its expenditure on account of the economic dislocation caused by the First World War, suppressed the superintendent commissioner's headquarters of the remote and relatively unproductive monthon Phetchabun. Ten years later, the government, feeling the 'aftereffects of the postwar crisis and the extravagance of the royal court',¹ suppressed the four Viceroyalties and the monthon headquarters of Roi-et, Ubonratchathani, Maharat and Chumphon. In 1932 and 1933, the government, suffering from the effects of the Great Slump,² suppressed the remaining monthon headquarters of Chanthaburi, Nakhon Chaisi, Nakhon Sawan, Pattani, Nakhon Sithammarat, Nakhon Ratchasima, Prachinburi, Phayap, Phitsanulok, Phuket, Ratburi, Ayutthaya, and Udonthani.³ By 1933 Prince Damrong's Thesaphiban system of provincial administration had ceased to exist and had passed on to history.

1. J.C. Ingram, Economic Change in Thailand since 1850 (1st edn., Stanford, 1955), p. 190.

2. ibid., pp. 235-237 Appendix B. The government ran deficits in 1920, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, and 1931.

3. The chronology of the suppression of the monthons is listed according to Prince Damrong and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., pp. 115-116.

The achievements of the Ministry of the Interior,
1892-1915.

Prince Damrong's resignation from the government in August of 1915 marked the end of a clearly defined era in the history of the Ministry of the Interior since 1892. The Prince had been the Minister of the Interior since 1892. During those twenty-three years, the Ministry of the North was transformed into the modern Ministry of the Interior and the traditional system of provincial administration was transformed into the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. These were years which saw failures, achievements, national, and personal triumphs.

On one level, it is only fair to assess the failures and achievements of the Ministry of the Interior during this period according to its own contemporary terms. These terms were determined by such factors as the objectives at which the Ministry aimed, the means which were placed at its disposal, and the forces against which it contended. In the speech which inaugurated the meeting of the superintendent commissioners on the 18th of January 1896, King Chulalongkorn had stated that the aim of all the government's reforms was 'to protect ourselves against internal and external dangers'. The King did not have

to tell his audience which countries threatened Siam's territorial integrity and independence. He merely hinted that these countries were ready to use any internal difficulty as an excuse to intervene in the government of the country. He left it to his audience to imagine what could possibly be these internal difficulties and to guess who would cause them.

On that occasion, King Chulalongkorn also stated the theoretical means by which Siam could protect herself against both external and internal dangers. The King said that there were a number of independent ways by which Siam's territorial integrity and interdependence could be maintained. First on the list he placed diplomatic dexterity but immediately said that this depended on internal stability. Internal peace depended in turn on the government's ability to enforce law and order. The government's power itself depended on the amount of money it had to purchase military equipments and to improve communications. Finally, the monetary supply depended on the reform of the administration and the development of the national economy. The King then left Prince Damrong to achieve the end with the means at his disposal.

Prince Damrong had very little real means at his disposal when he became the Minister of the North in 1892. The Ministry was small and poor but tried to be omniscient and occupied itself with every branch of the administration. It had thir-

teen executive officials, who, although the Ministry was divided into four divisions, observed little or no functional differentiation. As far as the provincial administration was concerned, the Ministry was responsible for only the northern half of the country. In these parts, it did not, however, so much directly govern as supervise the administration of the tributary states and the outer and inner provinces. The degree of political, administrative, judicial, and financial independence of these states and provinces depended upon their distance from Bangkok. The Ministry used force to demonstrate its supervisory power when this was challenged by a rebellion but otherwise reminded the tributary states that they belonged to the Kingdom of Siam only by crowning their rulers, by expecting them to swear allegiance twice a year, and by demanding tributes of Gold and Silver Trees and some exotic local produce. It supervised a little more closely the outer and inner provinces. It confirmed the succession of their governors. It expected governors of outer provinces to swear allegiance twice a year and to send an annual tribute commutation tax. It sent commissioners to outer and inner provinces to suppress banditry and to settle internal disputes, and, at the beginning of every reign, to register all able-bodied men, to measure the rice fields, and to count the fruit trees. It also farmed the taxes in the inner provinces even though the proceeds from them

took lamentably long to reach the treasury in Bangkok. From the 1870s onwards, the Ministry had commenced to reform the administration of the provinces which were under its supervision, but, by 1892, it had just started to see only the beginnings of a centralized system of provincial administration. It was not the least of Prince Damrong's achievements that, in 1894, he presided over the amalgamation of the Ministries of the North and the South and their transformation into the modern Ministry of the Interior.

The enormity of its task, the paucity of its means, and the strength of its adversaries inevitably meant that the Ministry of the Interior could not wholly fulfil the objectives for which the King set it in 1896. The Ministry could neither reform the provincial administration over-night nor prevent some internal disturbances which might have provided excuses for intervention in the Kingdom by France and Great Britain. In 1902, for instance, the Ministry, in its attempt to integrate the political organization and to centralize the administration of outlying states and provinces, encountered violent opposition in the forms of a mass rebellion in the northeast, an uprising in the northern former tributary state of Phrae, and a conspiracy in a few of the southern Malay provinces. The Ministry also failed to prevent the depredations of the Kingdom's territorial integrity by France and Great Britain. In

1893, the government, after a military defeat, had to cede all lands on the left bank of the Mekong River to France. Between 1904 and 1909, for political and economic reasons, it ceded some of the northeastern provinces on the right bank of the Mekong River to France and most of the southern Malay states to Great Britain.

In spite of its difficulties and the ensuing failures, the Ministry did succeed, however, to implement reforms which contributed towards the maintenance of that internal stability upon which depended Siam's independence. Between 1892 and 1915, the central administration of the Ministry was transformed out of all recognition to its former self. On the one hand, the Ministry ceded its military, judicial, and financial departments in Bangkok to the Ministries of Defence, Justice, and Finance and became solely responsible for the provincial administration of the Kingdom. The Ministry was then divided into three departments, the officials of which were made to observe a strict functional differentiation. By 1915, the number of these central departments had grown from three to six and the number of executive officials had increased from thirteen to a hundred and ninety-one. On the other hand, between 1896 and 1915, the Ministry became almost omniscient in a new way when it took over other ministries' work in the provinces. It also took over the departments in Bangkok which directed such work.

There were five such subsidiary departments namely the Forestry, Provincial Gendarmerie, Provincial Revenue, Health, and Criminal Investigation Departments. The Mines Department was also under the Ministry's direction from 1896 to 1909. By 1915, there were a hundred and twenty-eight executive officials working in the subsidiary departments of the Ministry.

It is true that the Ministry did not reform the provincial administration over-night but it did succeed in laying the foundation for a centralized system of provincial administration. From 1893 onwards, the Ministry imposed a centralized superstructural administration on the provinces by grouping them into circles or monthons over which it placed centrally appointed superintendent commissioners or khaluang thesaphiban. Members of the superintendent commissioners' headquarters then began to take over every branch of the provincial administration. The Edict concerning district administration of 1897 and the Regulations concerning provincial administration of 1899 gave the Ministry the legal instruments with which to effect the centralization of every branch and level of the administration in the provinces. This new structure of administration became known as the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. In spite of the removal of the superstructural monthon administration between 1915 and 1933 and the introduction of organizational changes between 1904 and 1914, the basic

system of provincial administration which was established between 1893 and 1899 has lasted with little further modifications to this day.

The Ministry's translation of the generalized intentions of the Edict and Regulations which set up the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration into concrete reality was gradual for a number of interrelated factors. The Ministry could not summarily dismiss the Princes of tributary states and most of the governors of outer and inner provinces for fear of arousing their opposition to the central government. This conciliatory policy in fact enabled some of the provincial nobility to covertly obstruct the reforms. The best example of the covert obstruction of reforms took place in 1898 when the governor of Nakhon Sithammarat challenged the superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Sithammarat's take-over of the common people's service for the government. In 1902, the Ministry also learnt at great costs that the policy did not prevent some of the provincial nobility from directly opposing reforms when they felt that their vested interests were about to be irrevocably abolished. Apart from the fear of opposition from the provincial nobility, shortage of funds was another factor which delayed the immediate fulfilment of reforms. The Ministry's financial difficulties arose from the fact that it took

large shares from relatively limited budgets.¹ The ensuing lack of money in turn meant that the Ministry was unable to establish immediately a professional civil service and had to retain provincial officials on a non-salaried basis. This impeded the progress of the implementation of the Thesaphiban system of administration in that these provincial officials were the ones who covertly obstructed reforms and, even when they were co-operative, they were unable to fulfil their tasks for lack of professional training.

Prince Damrong himself knew that the implementation of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration could take place only gradually. In 1908, on the eve of the final centralization of the former outer provinces in monthon Isan, the Prince warned King Chulalongkorn that,

'It will need more than ten years to implement this idea in the whole monthon, for, it is like, for an example, the provinces in the inner monthons where the same system of administration has been set up but has not been completely successful to this day.'²

The Ministry's difficulty arose from the fact that it had to extend the work of its subsidiary departments into the provinces

1. In 1914, the last full year in which Prince Damrong was Minister, the Ministry of the Interior was second in the budgetary list and took 18.24% of the budget. Siam, Ministry of Finance, Department of Commerce and Statistics, Statistical Year Book of the Kingdom of Siam 1916 (Bangkok 1916); my calculation of the percentage is based on figures published on pp. 38-39.

2. M.31/25: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 291/10629, 1 January 1908.

and to help the provincial agents of other ministries at the same time as it attempted to implement the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. These two tasks were interrelated because the Ministry would not have the money to expand its administration unless it helped to increase the revenue, which in turn could not rise unless it helped to develop the economy and to improve the administration. Between 1896 and 1915, the Ministry extended the work of the Provincial Gendarmerie Department into the provinces in order to try not only to establish that internal peace on which depended the country's territorial integrity and independence but also to protect the people in the making of their livelihood the taxes on which provided the government with its much-needed revenue. Its Health Department attempted to reduce the mortality rate so that there would be more people not only to serve in the armed forces but also to pay the taxes. Its Forestry and Mines Departments helped to augment the revenue by attracting foreign investments in forests and mines the concessions for which were guaranteed by government edicts and regulations and safeguarded by their inspection. The Ministry also helped to increase the revenue by participating in the government's efforts at agricultural development. From 1901 onwards, it helped the provincial agents of the Ministry of Agriculture to issue title deeds and to convey informations which gave respectively security of

tenure and knowledge of new agricultural methods to the farmers. From 1904 onwards, it helped to foster the silk industry of the northeast by co-operating in the establishment of schools which taught modern methods of sericulture.

The Ministry did ultimately succeed in implementing to a great extent the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. Between 1899 and 1915, the Ministry's Provincial Revenue Department extended its work to the furthest provinces from the headquarters of which its officials set out to collect taxes from people at every level of provincial life. During that period, the Provincial Revenue Department helped substantially to augment the revenue of the government.¹ The Ministry benefited from the increase in the revenue and the corresponding rise in the expenditure by obtaining a larger proportional share in the budget.² As it had more money at its disposal, the Ministry was gradually able to pension off such unco-operative noblemen as the governor of Nakhon Sithammarat and to replace them with centrally appointed professional civil servants. It

1. In 1913, for instance, the Provincial Revenue Department contributed 67.74% to the revenue of the government. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 3, 27 February 1915.

2. Between 1899 and 1915, the revenue rose by 41.55%, the expenditure by 35.97%, and the Ministry of the Interior's share by 34.75%. My calculation of the percentages is based on, Siam, Ministry of Finance, Department of Commerce and Statistics, op.cit., pp. 38-39.

also gradually improved the standards of its officials by giving them either informal apprenticeships in its central, monthon, provincial, and district offices or systematic training in the Royal Pages (Civil Service) School. The Ministry of Public Works also benefited from the increase in the revenue and the rise in the expenditure which enabled it to begin to build roads and railways and thus helping to centralize the country's communications while the Ministry of the Interior was centralizing its provincial administration.¹ Although it was not until 1923 that a centrally appointed governor took over the northeastern province of Sakon Nakhon,² the Ministry of the Interior already had by 1914, the last full year during which Prince Damrong was its Minister, three thousand one hundred and

1. By 1915, the railways had reached Sawankhalok in the north, Nakhon Sithammarat in the south, Nakhon Ratchasima in the east, Krom Rotfai, Ngan chalong rotfai luang khrop rop hasip pi, Commemorative volume published on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Royal Railways (Bangkok 1947), pp. 11-13. The Ministry of Public Works, although it had only received its first budget for highways in 1912, had built nearly 500 miles of roads by 1915. Krom Thang Luang Phaendin, Anuson Krom Thang Luang Phaendin, The Highways Department commemorative volume (Bangkok 1955), p. 54.

2. Phraya Prachantaprathet Thani (Ngonkham Phromsakha), Tamnan Muang Sakon Nakhon, The history of Sakon Nakhon (Bangkok 1924), p. 66.

twenty-seven professional civil servants stationed in the provinces.

On another level, it is necessary to point out, however, that the reform of the Ministry of the Interior and the implementation of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration created in themselves new problems which had both short and long term implications for Siam. Some observers were quick to see that one of the drawbacks of the Thesaphiban system of administration was its tendency towards the over-centralization and over-bureaucratization of the country. In 1919, Prince Bowaradet, the Viceroy of the northern Phayap Region, complained, for instance, that,

'The ultra centralized system of government at present in vogue (results in the fact that) no consideration of measures of importance is possible, because of the mass of unimportant matters that have to be got through and which can all but be accomplished in the time at disposal.'¹

The Prince thought that his officials spent their time, 'first and foremost, in correspondence and clerical labour', and then in the collection of taxes for the central government.

The tendency towards over-centralization and over-bureaucratization of the Thesaphiban system of administration led to the feeling that there was a subordination of provincial

1. 9/53: Bowaradet to Thewawong, 12 November 1919. Prince Bowaradet wrote this letter in English. Prince Thewawong passed this letter on to the Ministry of the Interior after he had read it.

to national interests. In 1902, Lyle, the British Vice Consul in Nan, thought that one of the reasons why the people of Phrae had supported the Shans' rebellion was because they resented paying the taxes while feeling that,

'...nothing was made for the country; the money was drained to Bangkok; the new administration has now been established for more than two years, and still nothing was undertaken in the way of public works.'¹

Four years later, J.I. Westengard, the General Adviser to the government, and Phraya Sisahathep (Seng Wirayasiri), the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of the Interior, informed the government that the same complaint could be made against the administration of monthon Phuket. They reported that the government raised an annual revenue from Phuket of over four million baht but spent annually only a hundred thousand baht on public works in the monthon.² In 1919, Prince Bowaradet felt that his officials in the Phayap Region had little time for considering or offering such public services as 'education, public and health works.'³

Prince Damrong was well aware of the drawbacks and tried to remove them from the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. The Prince realized that the government must

1. E.117/13: Robyns to Surasak Montri, 30 September 1902.

2. M.2/13: Westengard and Sisahathep to Chulalongkorn, 255/33946, 24 December 1906.

3. 9/53: Bowaradet to Thewawong, 12 November 1919.

put back into the provinces some of the money it took in the way of taxes in order to prevent people from thinking that they were completely subordinate to national interests. In 1904, he said, with reference to the district administration of Lampang in particular and of the rest of the country in general, that,

'District officers must think about improving their districts in the way of starting projects for public health, irrigation, and education in order to make the people feel that they are getting some returns for their money. Even if they cannot do all three things at once, the fact that they start to do one thing at a time is better than not to think about them at all.'¹

In 1907, the government decided to double its annual expenditure on public works in monthon Phuket.² In reply to Prince Bowaradet, Lyle, Westengard, and Phraya Sisahathep, Prince Damrong could have pointed out that the government could offer services to the people only in proportion to the rise in revenue. Between 1892 and 1915, the government did in any case offer more and more public services in all forms including those of education, public health, and public works.³

1. M.56/19: Damrong to Sommot Ammoraphan, 617/3130, 21 June 1904.

2. M.2/13: Minutes of the Cabinet concerning the report of monthon Phuket by J.I. Westengard and Phraya Sisahathep.

3. J.C. Ingram, op.cit., pp. 83-84. In 1913, the government started its first modern irrigation scheme north of Bangkok.

Prince Damrong also realized that he must try to remedy the over-centralization by introducing a measure of decentralization into the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. Although the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration provided to a certain extent for popular participation in the government by allowing people to elect village elders and the village elders to elect commune elders, Prince Damrong encouraged the introduction of a new measure of decentralization when the opportunity arose. In 1906, the Prince laid the foundation for municipal government in Siam by helping to create the country's first municipality (sukhaphiban) at the sub-district of Talat Tha Chalom in the province of Samut Sakhon. Having received complaints from the King that Talat Tha Chalom was extremely dirty, the Prince told the governor of Samut Sakhon to ask the local commune elder and village elders to make it a little cleaner. The governor called together not only the local commune elder and village elders but also the leading members of the community to consider the matter. This ad hoc council, which consisted of eight men under the leadership of the commune elder, raised a public subscription the proceeds from which enabled it to build roads, to dig drains, to distribute dust-bins, and to dispose of the refuse in the sub-district. The Prince felt that this good work ought to be maintained and ordered the provincial revenue officer to hand over

the revenue from the market tax to the council. He also authorized the council to collect rates on shops and houses in the sub-district.¹ The council was then able to put up street lamps, to buy lamp-oil, and to employ lamp-lighters and road-sweepers. It economised on its funds by arranging with the provincial gaol for the use of the prisoners in the collection and disposal of refuse. It posted monthly accounts so that people would know how it was spending their money.²

The promising start of the municipality of Talat Tha Chalom encouraged the government to promulgate an edict which authorized the creation of municipalities throughout the country. After Prince Damrong had prepared the superintendent commissioners to receive it in 1907, the government promulgated the Edict concerning the creation of municipalities in the provinces in 1908.³ In that Edict, the government stated that the purpose of a municipality was to promote public health and public works in a given area. The administration of a municipality in a provincial town was entrusted to a council which

1. 'Sukhaphiban Talat Tha Chalom', 'The Municipality of Talat Tha Chalom', Thesaphiban, iii (1907), 64-84.

2. 'Rai-ngan sukphaphiban Talat Tha Chalom r.s.125-126', 'Report of the municipality of Talat Tha Chalom 1906-1907', Thesaphiban, iii (1907), 85-90.

3. Prince Damrong discussed the question of municipalities at the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1907, 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.126', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1907', Thesaphiban, iv (1908), 126-130.

consisted of the governor, the deputy governor, the district officer, the provincial health officer, the provincial public works officer, and four commune elders. The administration of a municipality in a sub-district was entrusted to the local commune and village elders. A Municipality financed itself by collecting rates on market stalls, shops, and houses. The superintendent commissioners must, however, approve of the budgets of the municipalities in the towns, and the governors must approve of the budgets of the municipalities in the sub-district. The municipalities must also make public accounts of their revenue and expenditure once every three months.¹

Between 1908 and 1915, the Ministry of the Interior strove hard to implement the Edict concerning the creation of municipalities in the provinces in order to begin to decentralize the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. The Ministry discovered, however, that there were certain factors which precluded the immediate popular acceptance and implementation of the Edict in the provinces. It found that the people were generally apathetic towards the promotion of public health and did not think highly of the provision for their participation in municipal government. In 1915, Phraya Maha-ammattayathibodi (Seng Wirayasiri), the Deputy Minister of the Interior, reported

1. 'Phraratchabanyat chat kan sukhaphiban tam huamuang r.s. 127', 'The Edict concerning the creation of municipalities in the provinces of 1908', RKB, xxv, (1908), 668-673.

to King Wachirawut that,

'The people do not yet understand that by paying money they are looking after their own interests and happiness. They are not all that interested in public hygiene. ...In reality, the direction of municipal government depends mostly on the superintendent commissioners. If the superintendent commissioners give good directions, municipal government would be very beneficial to everybody. It is impossible to rely on the councillors to be the pillars of the municipality because it is difficult to find, among not only the people but also the councillors, someone who understands what is meant by municipal government. The councillors who are officials do as they like because they usually think that municipal government is just an ordinary duty of the central administration. The elected councillors think the same way and do not oppose any decision concerning either the government or the financial administration of the municipality.'¹

In spite of these difficulties, the Ministry did manage, however, to create municipalities in the major provincial towns of Nakhon Ratchasima, Chanthaburi, Songkhla, Chonburi, Nakhon Sithammarat, Nakhon Pathom, Phichai, Phuket, and Chiangmai between 1908 and 1915.²

Prince Damrong tried to remedy not only the over-centralizing but also the over-bureaucratizing tendencies of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1912, the Prince told his audience that,

1. 3/196: Maha-ammattayathibodi to Wachirawut, 2, 5 February 1915.

2. ibid. I have so far been unable to find any reference to sub-district municipalities being created during this period.

'Apathy of officials of almost all ranks leads to the failures in the administration which are attributable to personal conduct. I have seen this with my own eyes in several monthons. I suppose that senior officials behave like this because they like to follow old ways. When they do something in the traditional way, they feel that they are doing it sufficiently well. They do not try to see the point that it is the result that is important.'¹

The Prince urged the superintendent commissioners to set a good example to junior officials by having a more alert, active, and critical approach towards the administration. In anticipation of Prince Bowaradet's later criticism, he ended his speech by saying that, 'If senior officials spend their time giving orders from their offices, junior officials will likewise sit in offices and only write reports'.²

In spite of the failures and the drawbacks, the achievements of the Ministry of the Interior and the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration were above all Prince Damrong's personal triumphs. From 1892 to 1915, the Prince personally initiated many reforms and closely supervised the Ministry of the Interior and the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. From the very beginning, Prince Damrong showed a great gift for choosing able men to plan and to implement reforms. The Prince chose the brilliant and inventive Phraya

1. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.131', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1912', Thesaphiban, xv (1913), 160-161.

2. ibid., 162.

to being the superintendent commissioners of monthons Phetchabun and Udon.¹

Prince Damrong also inspired and led his men in words and in deeds. On his very first tour of the provinces in 1892, the Prince showed his firmness by summarily dismissing the corrupt and incompetent governor of Suphanburi. From that time onwards, he set a good example to his men by conscientiously touring most of the provinces. In 1904, for instance, he toured monthon Phetchabun which was infamous for malaria.² Two years later, he undertook an arduous trip around monthons Nakhon Ratchasima, Udon, and Isan. Wherever he went, the Prince talked to officials of all ranks and people of all levels, praised successes and criticized failures. He was rarely complacent and was sometimes the most exacting critic of his officials. At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1912, having complained about the apathy of some officials, he went on to tell his audience that,

'What the result of this apathy is I will show by what I have myself seen in several monthons. When I met commune and village elders on my tour of inspection and asked them about their villages, I received in most places only the replies that things were in good order. I was not at all pleased. I could have well believed that things were in good order in one or two places but I could not have possibly accepted that such was

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Nithan Borankhadi, Historical Anecdotes (1st edn., Bangkok 1944), pp. 131-157, and pp. 235-238.

2. ibid., pp. 131-157.

Maha-ammattayathibodi and Prince Maruphong Siriphat as respectively his personal assistant and the first superintendent commissioner of monthon Ayutthaya so that they helped him to plan reforms and to experiment with their implementation in one of the nearest monthons to Bangkok. He picked out the determined and efficient Phraya Surasi Pisitsak (Choei Kanlayanamit) as the first superintendent commissioner of monthon Phitsanulok which was situated strategically between the inner provinces and the northern tributary states. He entrusted the politically delicate task of centralizing monthon Nakhon Sithammarat to the solid and tenacious Phraya Sukhumnawinit (Pan Sukhum). The clever and patient Phraya Suntharaburi (Chom Suntharanchun) who was adept at gently coaxing confessions out of criminals he appointed the second superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Chaisi.¹ The humane and scholarly Phraya Boranratchathanin (Phon Dechakrup), who was one of the first men to carry out archaeological excavations in and around the city of Ayutthaya, he chose to be the second superintendent commissioner of monthon Ayutthaya. He raised the diligent and tough Phraya Phetrattanasongkhran (Fuang Fuangphet) and Phraya Sisuriyarat-chawaranuwat (Pho Tetipho) from being respectively a district officer in Phitsanulok and a page to Prince Sanphasitthirong

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Fawat Sukkhon Santhan Chabap Sombun, The Biographies of Important Men (Bangkok 1962), p. 322.

the case everywhere. When I had thought about it, I saw why they had a way of saying the same thing. It was the result of none other than the easygoing habits of senior officials of various ranks upwards from that of the district officer. When district officers ask commune and village elders about what is happening in their villages and if the latter reply that things are bad, the district officers would open the rule-book, scold them for not maintaining the peace, and order them to put down the banditry at all costs. They forget the important point that commune and village elders are our eyes and ears. If we just shout at them, they will of course say that things are in good order in order to escape being told off and ordered about and bringing difficulties upon themselves. If we do not have anyone as our eyes and ears, it is as if we blindfold and deafen ourselves and seek comfort in not knowing what is what.¹

The Prince himself was never easygoing and tried to be always alert and active. In 1904, for instance, apart from his tour of monthon Phetchabun, he also accompanied the King on an informal tour of monthons Nakhon Chaisi and Ratburi.²

Furthermore, Prince Damrong took a personal interest in not only every level but also every branch of the provincial administration. At the meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1910, Prince Damrong told his audience that they must co-operate with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Public Works in helping to convey agricultural informations and to construct roads and railways in order to help the farmers to diversify their crops and to facilitate the marketing of

1. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.131', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1912', op.cit., 160-161.

2. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, Shotmai het ruang praphat ton nai ratchakan thi ha, An account of King Chulalongkorn's informal tours (Bangkok 1923), pp. 1-45.

their produce.¹ When some of the superintendent commissioners raised the points that the officials at the district level who would have to carry out these tasks were already overworked and that the Ministry of the Interior would have to convince the Ministry of Finance of the necessity for the creation of new posts, the Prince chided them by saying that,

'The whole point of the subject under discussion is about how to increase the revenue as we believe that it can still be increased. We are stupid indeed if we cannot make (the Ministry of Finance) see this. Once we start, we will be able to compare the increase or decrease in the revenue with the amount of land we bring under cultivation. If we cannot increase the revenue by our efforts, we might as well give up the whole of the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration.'²

In spite of these difficulties, it must have pleased the Prince that Siam's silk export trebled between 1910 and 1916 thanks no doubt to the northeastern silk project which the Ministry of the Interior had encouraged from its inception in 1904.³

In 1915, Prince Damrong's resignation from the government did indeed mark the end of a clearly defined era. Between 1892 and 1915, the Prince had put an indelible personal mark on the

1. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.129', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1910', Thesaphiban, x (1910), 107-109.

2. 'Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s.129', 'The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1910' Thesaphiban, op.cit., 264.

3. Krasuang Kaset, Prawat Krasuang Kaset, The History of the Ministry of Agriculture (Bangkok 1957), p. 120.

Ministry of the Interior and the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. The work of the Ministry of the Interior and the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration in turn embraced most and touched all branches and levels of the government's activities throughout the country. During that period, Siam was transformed from being a conglomeration of states and provinces without clearly defined boundaries to being a compact state with a definite frontier. The foundations were laid for a modern central administration and a centralized provincial administration. A start was made in the development of the economy. The people were emancipated from semi-vassalage and slavery and initiated in self-government. The importance of the contribution the Ministry of the Interior made to the modernization of Siam can be gauged from the fact that, as soon as it started the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration, a distinguished foreign observer noted that,

'This scheme of centralization is much the most important - I might almost say the only effective - political development in modern Siam.'¹

The importance of Prince Damrong's personal contribution to the work of the Ministry of the Interior and the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration was acknowledged by King Chulalongkorn himself when, giving a present to the Prince on the

1. Sir Henry Norman, The Peoples and Politics of the Far East (1st edn., New York and London, 1895), p. 444.

occasion of his forty-eighth birthday in 1910, he said,

'Prince Damrong, it seems as if you and I have been married for a long time. Please take this ring which I am wearing as a present for your birthday. ...I wish you happiness, prosperity, security, and long life, so that you will remain to help to preserve the Kingdom in the times to come.'¹

King Chulalongkorn was not the only one to affirm Prince Damrong's contribution to the modernization of Siam. In 1924, the Englishman, W.A. Graham, who served as the Adviser to Kelantan from 1903 to 1909, looked back on the achievements of the Ministry of the Interior from 1892 to 1915 and paid this tribute to Prince Damrong:

'This Prince, than whom the Crown had, during the whole of his long service, no more active supporter in all schemes for the advancement of the country and for the emancipation of the people.'²

1. Princess Phun Phitsamai Ditsakun, comp. Phra prawat somdet Krom Phraya Damrong Rachanuphap ph.s. 2405-2486, A documentary biography of Prince Damrong Rachanuphap 1862-1943 (Bangkok 1944), p. 4.

2. W.A. Graham, Siam (London 1924), i, 322.

Appendix I

The Population of Siam in 1892.

I reached my estimation that the population of Siam in 1892 was probably just over four million in the following manner.

- | | | |
|----|---|-------------------------|
| 1. | The population of Siam according to the first nation-wide census survey in 1910 was | 8,149,487. ¹ |
| 2. | I subtracted the balance of Chinese immigration over emigration over the period from 1890-1910. | <u>197,800.</u> |
| | | 7,951,687. |
| 3. | I added the estimate of the population of the tributary states and outer provinces (Luang, Prabang, Bassac, Battambang, Siamriap, Kedah, Kelantan, and Trengganu) lost to the French and the British between 1892 and 1910. | <u>1,130,000.</u> |
| | | 9,081,687. |
| 4. | I then subtracted 58% from the population figures for 1910 on the basis that the annual population growth-rate was approximately 3% between 1892 and 1910. ² | <u>4,904,110.</u> |

1. 'Yot sammanokhrua kan liang chip lae kan suksa', 'A survey of the census, sources of livelihood, and educational achievements', Thesaphiban, xiii (1911), p. 251.

2. The 3% annual over-all population growth-rate was worked out from figures of previous limited census surveys taken in various monthons between 1903 and 1907. 'Ruang tham sammanokhrua huamuang', 'Census survey in the provinces', Thesaphiban, vii (1909), p. 16.

5. I reached the figures of

4,177,577.¹

1. I am indebted to Dr. David K. Wyatt of the School of Oriental and African Studies for giving me the figures for the balance of Chinese immigration over emigration between 1890 and 1910 and for the population of the tributary states and provinces which were lost to France over the same period, and for teaching me how to handle these demographic sources.

Appendix II

The establishment of the monthons.

The dates for the establishment of monthons vary from one source to another. I have listed them according to three standard printed sources, and have presented a new list based on manuscript and other printed sources.

Year	Source			
	Damrong ¹	Ratchasena ²	Chakkrit ³	MSS.
1892/3	Phitsanulok Prachinburi		Prachinburi	
1893/4	Ayutthaya Nakhon Ratchasima Nakhon ⁶ Sawan	Prachinburi		Nakhon Ratchasima ⁴ Prachinburi ⁵

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena (Siri Thephatsadin na Ayutthaya), Thesaphiban, The Thesaphiban system of provincial administration (2nd edn., Bangkok 1960), pp. 47-48.

2. ibid., pp. 95-106.

3. Chakkrit Noranitiphadungkan, Somdet phrachao borommawong-thoe krom phraya Damrong Rachanuphap kap Krasuang Mahatthai, Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and the Ministry of the Interior (Bangkok 1963), Appendix kho. pp. 549-553.

4. M.31/20: Prasit Sanlakan to Damrong, 8/286, 22 March 1895. Phraya Prasit Sanlakan (Sa-ad Singhaseni) said that the commissionership of Nakhon Ratchasima was transformed into a monthon in 1893.

5. Krasuang kan Khlang, Ruang Krom Sanphakon Nok, On the Provincial Revenue Department (Bangkok 1962), p.6.

6. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap, and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., pp. 47-48. Prince Damrong might have intended to say 1893 and 1894 instead of 1892 and 1893. The old Siamese calendar started on the 1st of April and ended on the 31st March.

Year	Source		
	Ratchasena	Chakkrit	MSS.
1894	Phitsanulok	Phitsanulok	Phitsanulok ¹
1895	Ayutthaya Nakhon Chaisi Nakhon Sawan	Ayutthaya Nakhon Chaisi Nakhon Sawan Phuket	Nakhon Chaisi ² Nakhon Sawan ³ Ratburi ⁴
1896	Chumphon Nakhon Sithammarat	Burapha Chumphon Nakhon Sithammarat	Burapha ⁵ Chumphon ⁶ Nakhon Sithammarat ⁷ Ayutthaya ⁸
1897	Kedah	Kedah	Kedah ⁹
1898	Phuket		Phuket ¹⁰
1899	Phetchabun Udon	Phetchabun	Phetchabun ¹¹ Udon ¹²

1. M.20/20: Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat to Damrong, 1 April 1899. Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Choei Kanlayanamit) said that he became the first superintendent commissioner of monthon Phitsanulok in July 1894.

2. M.17/21: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, Private 133/21183, 12 September 1895.

3. M.118/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 134/21679, 15 September 1895.

4. M.2/61: Surintharamat to Damrong, 32/94, 8 August 1895.

5. M.77/13: Sisahathep to Damrong, 7, 19 April 1899.

6. M.8/29: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, 79/732, 8 October 1896.

7. M.11/25: Sukhumnaiwinit to Damrong, 4 October 1898. Phraya Sukhumnaiwinit (Pan Sukhum) said that he became the first superintendent commissioner of monthon Nakhon Sithammarat in October 1896.

8. M.2/61: Maruphong to Damrong, 42100, 22 February 1896.

9. M.1/20: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, 241/1862, 30 March 1897.

10. M.11/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 42/11946, 15 July 1898.

11. M.22/29: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 119/4128, 19 Sept. 1899.

12. M.161/51: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, 59/600, 4 Sept. 1899.

Year	Source		
	Ratchasena	Chakkrit	MSS.
1900		Udon Isan	
1901	Nakhon Ratcha- sima		
1902	Phayap		
1903	Burapha		
1906	Chanthaburi Pattani	Chanthaburi Pattani Phayap (1902-1906)	Chanthaburi ¹ Pattani ²
1910			Isan ³
1912	Roi-et Ubon	Roi-et Ubon	Roi-et ⁴ Ubon ⁵
1915	Maharat ⁷	Maharat	Phayap (1902-1915) ⁶ Maharat

1. M.193/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 310/11673, 23 March 1906.

2. M.1/49 (ngo.) Bunch 2: Chulalongkorn to Damrong, 76/690, 25 July 1906.

3. M.31/25: Damrong to Sommot Ammoraphan, 145/802, 30 April 1910.

4 and 5. 11/9: Phamrongsiri to Damrong, 60/11955, 25 August 1912. Monthon Isan was divided into monthons Roi-et and Ubon in June 1912.

6. The government and financial administration of the northern tributary states were gradually centralized between 1902 and 1915. The judicial administration was finally centralized in 1915. Sutcharit Thawonsuk, Kan chat san huamuang khrang raek, The first reform of the judicial administration in the provinces (Bangkok 1964), p. 20.

7. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., p. 86. Monthon Phayap was divided into monthons Phayap and Maharat in 1915.

I have so far been unable to find a manuscript reference to their establishment.

Appendix III

The provinces in the monthons.

The monthon headquarters were situated in the first province mentioned in each list.

Ayutthaya

Ayutthaya, Angthong, Lopburi, Phromburi, Saraburi.

Burapha

Sisophon, Battambang, Phanomsok, Siamriap.

Chanthaburi

Chanthaburi, Rayong, Trat.

Chumphon (Suratthani)

Chumphon, and then Saratthani, Chaiya, Kanchanadit, Langsuan.

Isan

See Roi-et and Ubon.

Kedah

Kedah, Perlis, Satun (Setul).

Maharat

Lampang, Nan, Phrae.

Nakhon Chaisi

Nakhon Chaisi, Samut Sakhon, Suphanburi.

Nakhon Ratchasima

Nakhon Ratchasima, Buriram, Chaiyaphum.

Nakhon Sawan

Nakhon Sawan, Chainat, Kamphaengphet, Manorom, Phayuhakhiri, Sanburi, Tak, Uthaithani.

Nakhon Sithammarat

Songkhla, Nakhon Sithammarat, Phatthalung.

Pattani

Pattani, Nongchik, Raman, Ra-ngae, Saiburi, Yala, Yaring.

Phayap

Chiangmai, Lamphun.

Phetchabun

Phetchabun, Lomsak.

Phitsanulok

Phitsanulok, Phichai, Phichit, Sukhothai, Sawankhalok.

Phuket

Phuket, Krabi, Phang-nga, Ranong, Takuapa, Trang.

1. Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., pp. 82-86.

Prachinburi

Prachinburi, Chachoengsao, Nakhon Nayok, Phanom Sarakham.

Ratburi

Ratburi, Kanchanaburi, Phetburi, Pranburi, Samut
Songkhram.

Roi-et

Roi-et, Kalasin, Mahasarakham.

Ubon

Ubonratchathani, Khukhan, Sisakhet, Surin.

Udon

Udonthani, Khonkaen, Loei, Nakhon Phanom, Nongkhai,
Sakhon Nakhon.

Appendix IV

The superintendent commissioners from 1893 to 1915.

Ayutthaya

- 1896-1903 Major General Prince Maruphong Siriphat.
1903-1929 Phraya Boran Ratchathanin (Phon Dechakhup).

Burapha

- 1896-1902 Colonel Phraya Sakdaphidet Worarit (Dan Ammaranon)
1902-1906 Chao Phraya Aphaiphubet (Chum Aphaiwong).

Chanthaburi

- 1906-1909 Phraya Witchayathibodi (Baen Bunnag).
1909-1914 Colonel Phraya Trangkhaphumiban (Thanom Bunyaket).
1914-1915 Prince Thamrongsiri Sithawat.

Chumphon

- 1896-1901 Phraya Damrong Sutcharit (Khosinkong na Ranong).
1901-1905 Phraya Worasit Sewiwat (Taihak Phatthranawik).
1905-1913 Phraya Mahiban Borirak (Sawat Phumirat).
1913- ? Phraya Borirak Phuthon (Phloi na Nakhon).

Isan

- 1891-1910 Prince Sanphasitthiprasong was High Commissioner.
1910-1912 Phraya Sithammasokkarat (Charoen Charuchinda).

Kedah

- 1897-1907 Chao Phraya Ritsongkhramphakdi (Abdul Hamid).

Maharat

- 1915-1925 Phraya Phetrattanasongkhram (Luang Phumirat).

Nakhon Chaisi

- 1895-1898 Phraya Mahathep (But Bunyarattaphan).
1898-1915 Phraya Suntharaburi (Chom Suntharanchun).

Nakhon Ratchasima

- 1893-1901 Major General Phraya Singhaseni (Sa-ad Singhaseni).
1901-1901 Major General Phraya Kamhaeng Songkhram (Kat Singhaseni).
1901-1907 Colonel Phraya Suriyadet Wisetrit (Chan Intharakamhaeng).
1907-1913 Phraya Chasaenyabodi (Uap Paorohit).
1913-1923 Lieutenant General Phraya Phahon Phonphayuhasena (Nop Phahonyothin).

Nakhon Sawan

- 1895-1896 Colonel Phraya Datsakon Palat (Thongyu Rohitsathian).
1896-1902 Colonel Phraya Kraiphet Rattanasongkhram (Chae Bunnag).
1902-1910 Phraya Ammarinthararuchai (Chamrat Rattanakun).
1910-1916 Phraya Ronnachai Chanyut (Suk Chotikasathian).

Nakhon Sithammarat

- 1896-1906 Phraya Sukhumnaiwinit (Pan Sukhum).
1906-1910 Phraya Chonlaburanurak (Charoen Charuchinda).
1910-1925 Prince Lopburi Ramet.

Pattani

1906-1923 Phraya Dechanuchit (Na Bunnag).

Phayap

1902-1915 Phraya Surasi Wisitsak (Choei Kanlanamit) was High Commissioner.

Phetchabun

1899-1903 Phraya Phetrattanasongkhram (Fuang Fuangphet).

1903-1907 The monthon was incorporated into monthon Phitsanulok.

1907-1911 Colonel Phraya Thephathibodi (Im Thephanon).

1911-1915 Phraya Phetrattanasongkhram (Luang Phumirat).

Phitsanulok

1894-1902 Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Choei Kanlayanamit).

1902-1903 Phraya Phakdinarong (Sin Kairiok).

1903-1906 Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Pho Netipho).

1906-1906 Phraya Chonlaburanurak (Charoen Charuchinda).

1906-1906 Colonel Phraya Thephathibodi (Im Thephanon).

1906-1922 Phraya Uthaimontri (Charoen Charuchinda).

Phuket

1898-1899 Phraya Wisut Sakhondit (Sai Chotikasathian).

1899-1900 Phra Worasit Sewiwat (Taihak Phatthranawik).

1900-1913 Phraya Ratsadanupradit (Khosimbi na Ranong).

1913-1920 Lieutenant General Phraya Surinthararacha (M.R. Sit Suthat).

Prachinburi

1893-1897 Major General Phraya Ritthirong Ronnachet (Suk Chuto).

1897-1899 Lieutenant General Phraya Woradet Sakdawut (Chek Charuchinda).

1899-1903 Prince Alangkan (Malakun).

1903-1915 Major General Prince Maruphong Siriphat was Special Commissioner.

Ratburi

1895-1899 Phraya Surinthararuchai (Thet Bunnag).

1899-1901 Lieutenant General Phraya Woradet Sakdawut (Chek Charuchinda).

1901-1904 Phraya Ammarinthararuchai (Chamrat Rattanakun).¹

1904-1914 Colonel Phraya Kraiphet Rattanasongkhram (Chae Bunnag).

1914-1915 Prince Saritdet Chayangkun.

Roi-et

1912-1914 Prince Thamrongsiri Sithawat.

1914- ? Colonel Phraya Seni Narongrit (Thanom Bunyakert).

1. M.192/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 161/6194, 14 September 1904.

Ubon

1912-1925 Phraya Sithammasokkarat (Piu Bunnag).

Udon

1899-1906 Prince Watthana (Rongsong).

1906-1914 Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Pho Netipho).¹

1914-1922 Phraya Sisuriyaratchawaranuwat (Suk Ditsayabut).²

1. M.193/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 309/11672, 28 March 1906; and M.202/51: Damrong to Chulalongkorn, 20/1405, 14 May 1914.

2. Unless otherwise stated, the source for this Appendix is Prince Damrong Rachanuphap and Phraya Ratchasena, op.cit., pp. 96-106.

Appendix V

Number of districts, sub-districts, and villages
in the monthons established between 1893 and 1899.

<u>monthons</u>	districts	sub-districts	villages
Ayutthaya	25	479	4447
Burapha	13	80	800
Chumphon	15	152	1515
Nakhon Chaisi	11	254	2571
Nakhon Ratchasima	7	-	378
Nakhon Sawan	20	506	1845
Nakhon Sithammarat	17	232	2669
Phitsanulok	19	325	4006
Prachinburi	16	86	390
Ratburi	20	506	1845
	163	2769	20495

I have been unable to find the figures for the number of districts, sub-districts, and villages in monthons Kedah, Phetchabun, Phuket, and Udon. They were probably missing for a number of reasons. In Chapter V, it is shown that in the case of Kedah, the superintendent commissioner and his officials completely failed to implement the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration. In the cases of Phetchabun, Phuket, and Udon, the monthons were founded at the very end of the period under consideration and the superintendent commissioners had probably not had time to begin to implement the Thesaphiban system of provincial administration at the district, sub-district, and village levels.

In the ten monthons for which figures were available, it was possible to reach the following figures for the average number of villages in a sub-district and of sub-districts in a district. The average number of villages in a sub-district was reached by dividing the number of villages by the number of sub-districts. The result was 7.402 or 7 to the nearest whole number. The average number of sub-districts in a district was reached by dividing the number of sub-districts by the number of districts. The result was 16.988 or 17 to the nearest whole number.

Appendix VI

Dependencies and provinces in the administrative areas.

The administrative area (boriwen) headquarters were situated in the first town mentioned in each list.

The North-western monthon or monthon Phayap.

Boriwen Northern Chiangmai.

Chiangrai, Chiangsaen, Papao, Nongkhwang, and Fang.

Boriwen Western Chiangmai.

Maehongson, Yuam, Khun Yuam, and Pai.

Boriwen Northern Nan.

Chiangkhong, Thoeng, Chiangkham, Chianglaeng, Chianglom, Chianghon, (Khop, and Kutsawadi were annexed by France in 1904).¹

Monthon Udon

Boriwen Makkhaeng.

Ban Makkhaeng (Udonthani), Nongkhai, Nonglahan, Kumphawapi, Kamutthasai, Phonphisai, and Rattanawapi.

Boriwen Phachi.

Khonkaen, Chonnabot, and Phuwiang.

Boriwen That Phanom.

Nakhon Phanom, Chaiburi, Tha Uten, and Mukdahan.

Boriwen Sakon

Sakon Nakhon.

Boriwen Nam Huang.

Loei, Kaen Thao, Bo Tha.²

Monthon Isan.

Boriwen Ubon.

Ubonratchathani, Khemmarat, Yasothon.

Boriwen Champassak (Bassac).

Champassak (Bassac).

Boriwen Khukhan.

Khukhan, Sisaket, and Det-udom.

Boriwen Surin.

Surin, and Sangkha.

Boriwen Roi-et.

Roi-et, Mahasarakham, Kalasin, Kammalasai, Suwannaphum.³

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2 & 3. ibid., 297-298.

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All but one of the manuscript sources used in this Thesis can be found in the National Archives of Thailand in Bangkok. There are certain differences between British and Thai practices regarding the cataloguing of manuscripts which are reflected in different methods of manuscript citations. The manuscript sources for the reign of King Chulalongkorn (the Fifth Reign of the Chakkri Dynasty 1868-1910) are divided into two groups, the first of which consists of papers from the period before the reform of the central government (1868-1885/1892) and the second of which consists of papers from the period after the reform (1885/1892-1910). The papers of the pre-reform period are classified by ministries, divided into volumes, and put into series according to chronological order. The papers of the post-reform period are classified by ministries and divided into volumes but are put in series according to subject matter. The manuscript sources of the reign of King Wachirawut (the Sixth Reign of the Chakkri Dynasty 1910-1925) are not classified by ministries but are divided into volumes and put into series according to subject matter.

National Archives of Thailand in BangkokFifth Reign

Ministry of Defence Papers (K. for Kralahom)

Series 1389.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Papers (T. for Tang Prathet)

Series 13 Provinces.

Ministry of the Interior Papers (M. for Mahatthai)

Series 1891

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|----|---|
| 1 | General |
| 2 | General |
| 3 | Ranks, Titles, and Decorations. |
| 4 | Bandits. |
| 5 | Corp. of Pages. |
| 6 | Meetings of the superintendent commissioners. |
| 7 | Condition of the people. |
| 8 | French nationals in Siam. |
| 9 | The Holy Men's Rebellion of 1902. |
| 12 | Immigration and emigration. |
| 13 | Tours of inspection in the provinces. |
| 16 | Resignation of officials. |
| 17 | Luang Prabang. |

Series	19	General.
	20	Provincial administration.
	21	Condition of the officials.
	22	Financial administration.
	23	Judicial administration.
	25	Reports from the provinces.
	29	Demarcation of provinces.
	31	Corruption.
	32	Registration of the people.
	37	<u>Monthon</u> Nakhon Ratchasima.
	39	<u>Monthon</u> Phayap.
	40	<u>Monthon</u> Burapha.
	41	Examinations at District Administration Schools.
	43	Commune and village elders.
	44	Luang Prabang.
	45	The Shans' Rebellion in Phrae in 1902.
	46	<u>Monthon</u> Nakhon Sithammarat.
	47	<u>Monthon</u> Nakhon Sithammarat.
	48	Kedah.
	49	<u>Monthon</u> Pattani.
	50	The people and the commutation tax.
	51	Appointments and transfers of officials in the provinces.
	55	Chiangmai.
	56	Bassac.
	57	Timber concessions.
	58	<u>Monthon</u> Pattani.
	59	Vientiane.
	61	<u>Monthon</u> Ratburi.
	62	<u>Monthon</u> Phuket.
	63	<u>Monthon</u> Phayap.
	71	Prince Phichit Prichakon's reform of the administration of Chiangmai, Lampang, and Lamphun in 1884.
 <u>Sixth Reign</u>		
Series	52	Appointments and transfers of officials.
	61	<u>Monthon</u> Pattani.
	91	Reports from the provinces.
	96	Meetings of the superintendent commissioners.
	126	General.
	196	Tours of inspection in the provinces.

Series 214 Reform of the administration of
Satun (Situl).

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