

ABSTRACT

Thesis Title : Role and Authority of the Standing Committee of the Senate, The Kingdom of Thailand.

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Degree Sought : Master of Laws

Academic Year : 1998

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In parliamentary democracy form of government, it could be said that the organs exercising the sovereign power of state - the supreme power - are the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. The structure of the legislature or parliament, the organization representing the people in the country, normally can be divided into two systems, unicameral and bicameral. The parliament system of individual country depends upon its rationale and political, economic and social necessities. Thailand has witnessed both unicameral and bicameral parliamentary system since her transition from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy on 24 June 1932, according to the provisions of the constitution being appropriately in force at different times and situations.

In discharging the functions particularly in the role and power of parliament, the committee system is mostly needed. In other words, committees are part of the legislature exercising their responsibility as entrusted by the parliament. In general, the committee system, being the committee in the House of Representatives, the

Senate or the Parliament as a whole, is designed to strengthen the work of the legislature toward its objectives. This is particularly necessary as the division of legislative work and responsibility has been broadened and become more and more complex. The parliamentary committees are therefore regarded as vital to the functioning of the legislature. This study is aimed at an analysis on the role, power and responsibility of the Standing Committees of the Senate in their consideration of draft bills and organic law bills, and in their investigation or studies on the matters within the power of the parliament. How the standing committee exercises their power with the degree of seriousness, prudence, reasonableness and justness of their actions and how they can be improved. In this connection, this study will trace the origin and development of these Standing Committees of the Senate as found in the pertinent articles of the Constitutions of the Kingdom of Thailand and all the rule of procedures of the Senate. It will also point out factors which have obstructed or restrict their important role.

This thesis, having taken into consideration the work of the past and present Committees, concludes that their role and responsibility is necessary and vital to the functioning of the Senate. Their performance, in compliance with the relevant articles of the Constitutions and the rule of procedures of the Senate, is, however, satisfactory in terms of efficiency to a certain degree. There are still negative factors hindering better work of the Committees. Improvement should be made in the following areas : the scope of power of the committees to initiate bills, their schedule for consideration of bills and organic law bills, their method of work relating to regular parliamentary sessions, description of their responsibility in the rule of procedures of the Senate, public hearings, method of work relating to Committees' reports and their ability to summon persons and documents. Moreover, the Senate should request its Standing Committees to consider more bill or

organic law bills. The membership of the Committees and their working groups should also be improved. In addition, the Prajadhipok Institute should provide them with a training programme on legislative support. Such an improvement should help strengthen the work of the Standing Committees of the Senate in terms of its clarity, prudence, efficiency and perfection.