

'No Umno branches in Sabah, Sarawak'

NSun 25 AUG 1985
KUCHING, Sar. D.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reiterated Umno's stand that it did not wish to set up branches in Sarawak and Sabah.

"We do not want to disturb the political parties here," he said.

"We are also quite happy to work with the component parties of the State Barisan Nasional.

"But Umno will not set up branches in Labuan because it is a Federal Territory," he told newsmen at the international airport here before leaving for Kuala Lumpur at the end of his four-day State visit.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Umno president, was commenting on the call by Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Sarawak (PMS) president yesterday that the presence of Umno in Sarawak and Sabah would enhance national integration.

Datuk Wan Yusof Tuanku Haji Bujang had in an interview with the *Sarawak Tribune*, an English daily, said he was confident that Umno would be welcomed by Sarawak Bumiputeras.

"The Bumiputeras can join Umno, resulting in a reduced number of political parties in the two States," he had said.

Datuk Wan Yusof had said leaving out Sarawak Bumiputeras from Umno would only mean isolating them from a big and strong organisation.

Another Sarawak personality, Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji Abdul Rahman Yaakub, had also recently called on Umno to consider coming to Sarawak and Sabah.

The former Yang di-Pertua Negeri believed that Umno's presence in Sarawak and Sabah could help reduce the number of Bumiputera political parties, which he maintained were prerequisites for unity and solidarity in the two States.