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Economist on crusade to raise awareness

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New book highlights little-known documents crucial to nation's founding

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KOTA KINABALU: A Sabah economist is on a mission to create more awareness about what he describes as two little-known documents that are crucial to the nation's founding 52 years ago.

For Zainnal Ajamain, the Malaysia Agreement Inter-Governmental Committee Report (IGCC) are the basis why Sabah and Sarawak agreed to team up with Malaya and Singapore to form Malaysia in 1963.

"Yet this Malaysia Agreement and IGCC is missing from the Malaysian historical narrative. It is not taught in our schools and universities," said Zainnal, who authored a book about the significance of both documents.

He said that even civil servants were not taught about both documents as part of formative training before starting work.

So how could an officer from the peninsula understand the special privileges accorded to Sabah and Sarawak when he or she is posted to both states? Zainnal asked.

He said it was thus not surprising that resentment was building up among Sabahans and Sarawakians, adding that it has been 50 years in the making.

In the 423-page book titled *The Queens Obligation*, Zainnal argues the British colonialists secured caveats and safeguards for Sabah and Sarawak that were secured in the Constitution.

The Constitution of Malaya was amended by as much as 50% to incorporate the Malaysia Agreement that included the safeguards that the British wanted for the two Bornean states, he explained.

Among these safeguards was that Sabah and Sarawak were entitled to 10% royalties of any petroleum products exported from either state.

In addition, the Malaysia Agreement also provides for Sabah being entitled to 40% of any net revenue collected by the Federal Government in the state.

He said the title of the book was derived from a reply of the Queen of England to a petition sent to her by the people of Baram in



Revealing book: Zainnal showing his book during a press conference in Kota Kinabalu.

Sarawak in 1959.

The Queen responded to the petition in 1960, giving her assurance that the government would abide with the Sarawak Constitution and the Nine Cardinal Principles of the White Rajah, said Zainnal who spent more than 15 years to research the book.

In his foreword in the book, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman said Zainnal's research efforts and the publication could be a starting point for more studies about the nation's founding.

Zainnal had uncovered many startling issues on the formation of Malaysia, Anifah noted.

Details about the sale of the book is available through ceobruconn@gmail.com or call Ceilla Gilingan at 011-3213 0033.