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BOOK REVIEW

Graham Saunders

Alex C. Castles; *The Constitutional and Legal History of Sarawak. Documents and Commentaries. Vol 1 Peoples' Law Making and Brooke Rule*. Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia Cawangan Sarawak (Malaysia Historical Society Sarawak Branch), 2003, xx+294 pages.

The layman does not immediately associate a legal treatise with the words accessible, fascinating, illuminating and informative, but this collection of documents and commentaries is all of these and is a significant contribution to Sarawak history. Professor Cashes is Emeritus Professor of Law, University of Adelaide and Professorial Fellow, Flinders University of South Australia. This compilation of documents from a variety of sources, many of them not easily accessible, brings together the foundation materials for Sarawak's legal and constitutional history, beginning with Adat Law, which preceded the Brookes, evolved as a significant element in the legal and constitutional structures they developed and retains an important role in regulating community life and land holding. Chapters 9 and 11, dealing with the administration of justice 1842 to 1942 and with Indigenous Community Law under Brooke rule, cover this development.

James Brooke began as a private adventurer, dependent for recognition in the first instance on the Brunei Sultanate. Much of his and Charles Brooke's energies were devoted to obtaining recognition of their independence from Brunei, extending their borders at the Sultanate's expense, and obtaining international recognition of these acquisitions. This tortuous process takes up Chapters 2 to 6 and was inextricably linked to recognition of the legitimacy of the Brooke family dynasty, the subject of Chapter 7.

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