

Prototype of the Arab School in the Kingdom of Sambas of West Borneo in the Early 20th Century

Erwin Mahrus

State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN)

Pontianak, Indonesia

erwinmahrus@gmail.com

Abstract— In West Borneo, of the fourteen sultanates that one existed, Sambas was the most dynamic Malay kingdom in its intellectual history. Sambas was once known as the "Terrace of Mecca" in West Kalimantan. It was due to the fact that this area has many scholars who once lived and studied for years in the Holy Land of Mecca. Its strategic position on the international navigational silk line, making Sambas one of the Islamic religious learning centers at that time. Unsurprisingly, then the oldest educational institution in West Kalimantan was initiated by the the Kingdom of Sambas. This paper aims to examine the Kingdom of Sambas education system. As a philological study, the primary source of this research is the manuscript of *Sepatah Kata tentang al-Madrasah al-Sultaniyah (An Overview of the Sultan's School* – hereafter referred to and abbreviated as SKMS). Departing from this study, some important findings have been revealed. First, since the beginning, this so-called Arab School rejected the subsidies of the Colonial Government. The reason was clear. It did not want to be contaminated by the mission and colonial interests. The financial source of education was entirely derived from royal funding called the *baitul mal*. This is related to the education financing policies applied. Second, the aims of establishing the Arab School, the background of teachers, learners, and the curriculum used have been identified. Third, the contribution of the Arab School. With the charisma of a visionary sultan supported by scholars and competent instructors, this Arab School served as center to prepare candidates for government offices and the establishment of religious society in this region and its surroundings.

Keywords— Arab School; Kingdom of Sambas; prototype

I. INTRODUCTION

The Kingdom of Sambas is one of the few sultanates in the Indonesian archipelago that directly manages an educational institution that is open to the people and able to survive to date. Needless to say, this educational institution did not appear suddenly, but through long and complicated efforts. This popular educational institution referred to as Arab School, originated from a special educational program for the royal family. However, this program was then managed to be a formal educational institution parallel to the schools that first appeared in Sambas. The school then became the answer to the need for religious education at the time. The school systems that had classes, open curricula, competent teaching staff, transparent financial management, were supported by sincere, charitable managers that further strengthened the existence of

this institution. What is interesting to examine is how the dynamics of this school became one of the main contributors to the progress of the *Wathiqubillah* Dynasty (a title for the Kingdom of Sambas).

II. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

A. SKMS Manuscript

The description in this section is largely based on the data obtained by applying the philological research steps consisting of the inventory of the manuscript, origin of the manuscript, description of the manuscript, summary of the text content, and description of the prototype of the Arab School in the SKMS manuscript.

When viewed from the inventory aspect, the SKMS manuscript is found only in a collection of manuscript at the *Museum Tamadun Islam Nagri Sambas* (Museum of the Islamic Civilization of the Kingdom of Sambas). In addition to not having the number and code of variant of manuscripts or text versions, this text is not found in the catalog of manuscripts ever published, either manual or digital.

The origin of this SKMS manuscript is from a village on the banks of the Subah River in Sambas. The village is known by the name of Dagang Timur Village located in Subdistrict of Sambas, Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan Province. This manuscript is preserved in a house of *Maharaja Imam* (highest religious official) of Sambas, H. Muhammad Basiuni Imran. This house was made by the Government of Sambas District in 2002 as a museum called the *Museum Tamadun Islam Nagri Sambas* (Museum of the Islamic Civilization of the Kingdom of Sambas). The researcher found this SKMS manuscript when doing research on the History of Sultanates in the Indonesian Archipelago which was in cooperation between Research and Development Agency of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia and the State College of Islamic Studies (STAIN) Pontianak in 2010. The researcher was allowed by officer of the museum to digitalize this manuscript.

In general, the SKMS manuscript is described as an anonymous text (author's name not listed). However, since this manuscript is found in the collection of the *Golongan Pengetahuan* (Knowledge Group) archives, presumably it was written by one of the administrators of the organization of the Arab School. Since it does not have numbers and codes, the

SKMS manuscript seems to have never been researched or published by anyone. This text also does not have a colophon that mentions the name of the copyist. The physical condition of the SKMS manuscript is slightly damaged. The type of this manuscript is a bluish striped paper. Therefore, the SKMS manuscript has no watermark and countermark. The writing in this manuscript entirely uses black ink and is quite legible. The whole page uses two thin grayish lines.

The SKMS manuscript consists of one quire with a total of 8 sheets and 15 pages. The number of lines per page in average is 23. The size of this manuscript is 21x16.3 cm, while the text size in the manuscript is 17.5x11.5. The SKMS manuscript does not have page numbering and word redirects. This manuscript uses the Jawi alphabeth with the Malay language. The types of handwriting used in this manuscript are *riq'ah* and *thuluth*. In some pages, this text has a commentary especially on the edge of the paper. This manuscript has no colophon at the end and has 1 blank page.

The summary of the texts written on the SKMS is as follows: Pages 1-2 contain the text of the early history of the establishment of the Arab School in the Kingdom of Sambas. These pages contain the origins of the Arab School naming and the parties involved as founders. Pages 2-8 discuss the progress of this school including community responses, responses from the Colonial Government, changes of the Principals, financing sources, development and inauguration of new buildings, as well as the profile of graduates. Meanwhile, starting on page 9 to 15, this text contains minutes of meeting that discuss the plans of developing Arabic School curricula.

An important issue to elaborate is that the contents of this manuscript are authentic data about the history of Islamic education in West Borneo especially in the Kingdom of Sambas in the early 20th century. The success of revealing the content of this text will contribute to a description of Islam in the region in the future.

B. Islamic Education in West Borneo

Prior to the presence of the Arab School in Sambas, Islamic education in West Borneo took place in *surau* (smaller mosque) or mosques, teachers' houses, and the Palace. In Sambas, for example, Surau Raden Sulaiman located downstream of Sambas Kecil River is believed to have long been a place to study Islam [1] and so is Surau Sirajul Islam in Selakau [2]. In addition, when the Jami' Mosque of Sultan Safiuddin II Sambas was built, the *Maharaja Imam* of Sambas, for example, said that each Friday he provided religious instruction (*tashwir*) to the male congregations in this mosque [3]. In addition, the teachers' houses are also used as the places for teaching Islamic religion. For example, the houses of *tariqa* teachers such as Qadiriyyah wa Naqsabandiyah, H. Nurdin Tekarang in Sambas [4] and H. Muhammad Basiuni Imran's house in Dagang Timur Village [5]. Still in Sambas, the royal palace also became the locus of Islamic education. *Maharaja Imam of Sambas*, for example, gave Islamic lessons to the sultan's daughters at the palace every day [6]. If seen from its place, learners of the palace shool were limited to the family members of the Sultan.

As for Pontianak, there are a number of *surau*s used as places for Islamic education by scholars who had lived for many years and studied in the Holy Land of Mecca. Mahmud [7] (1) reported that a number of mosques were used for the purpose such as Surau Haji Mustafa (Kamboja Village), Surau Tuan Guru Haji Muhammad Bakau (Kamboja Village), Surau Wan Qasim Baraqbah (Melayu Laut Village) and Surau Tuan Guru Haji Abdul Aziz (Tambelan Village).

In addition to the *surau*, religious education also took place in teachers' houses, for example, the homes of Tuan Guru Ismail Jabal and Tuan Guru Ismail Kelantan [7]. While in Kubu, the Batu *surau* / mosque served as the place of Islamic religious education by the Teluk Pakedai community and its surroundings, in addition to the private home of Tuan Guru Haji Ismail Mundu [8].

The *surau*, the teacher's houses, and the palace are among the institutions for studying religion in a narrow sense: learning to read the Qur'an, the pillars of faith, the various ordinances of worship such as prayer, fasting, and alms. Those stayed for quite a while in these institutions, also had the opportunity to participate in the *tariqa* activities. The reading materials were not yet available, so all depended on the teacher (teacher oriented). The educational system adopted was *halaqah* where students and teachers sit together on the floor to form a circle. His pupils came from various ages: teenagers, youth to adults. Study time was usually late afternoon and evening. The time for learning was not restricted; From one to two years or more than ten years. Therefore, the presence of the Arab School in Sambas, as described earlier, was the first Islamic educational institution in West Borneo. In addition, this school can be seen as an innovative effort toward the *surau* education institutions and teachers' homes that have existed before. The school began introducing new ways to learn and teach, establishing a better class system, using benches and student desks, preparing a well-organized and refined curriculum, managing school organization and administration, collecting school fees from pupils, and awarding graduates with diplomas. The school reached its peak in 1936 with the Restructuring of the Arab School [9].

After the establishment and development of the Arab School in Kingdom of Sambas, a similar school was opened in Kingdom of Pontianak around 1938 [7]. The curriculum developed at the Pontianak Arab School was in fact similar to that of the Arab School of Sambas. This similarity is possible because of a very close relations, especially through correspondence, between the *Maharaja Imam* of Sambas and *Mufti* of Pontianak at the time. In the next two decades, another Arab School was founded and run by the Arab community in Pontianak called BAWAMAI (*Badan Wakaf al-Madrasah al-'Arabiyyah Islamiyyah*) on October 10, 1957 [4] [10]. This article seeks to study the Arab School in Sambas which will be the precursor of the Arab schools founded in the next period.

C. Prototype of the Arab School in SKMS manuscript

Prototipe (prototype) according to Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language is the original model which becomes an example; Original example; Basic shape; Original form; (Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language [KBBI]) [11].

Thus, the prototype referred to in this article is an early form of the Arab School established and developed in Sambas based on the SKMS manuscript.

The research on the SKMS manuscript to take a closer look at a prototype of the school Arab is categorized several parts as follows: First, nomenclature of the educational institution. For the Sambas community, this educational institution has several names. Among the most popular names is the *Arab School* because it taught Arabic and the lessons used Arabic books. Based on the textbooks used at the time, the alphabet used was also Arabic for example in math, let alone in subjects of *qira'ah* (reading) and *kitabah* (writing).

"This school was called the Religious School in general because it provided mostly Islamic Religion and later also called the Arab School for Arabic was also taught here." [12].

In addition to the above definition, the name *Arab School* is used to distinguish it from the Malay Schools and Chinese Schools founded earlier in Sambas. The Malay School is another name of the People's School (*Volkschool*) which was organized by the Colonial Government. While the Chinese School was a school organized by the Colonial Government for the people of ethnic Chinese and commonly abbreviated HCS (*Holland Chinese School*). The title of Arab School was also used because of the dress code. Based on visual data in the form of photographs made around 1930, teachers and students of the Arab School were dressed as Arabs with a robe and fez.

In addition to the title of Arab School, this educational institution was also called a Religious School. It is so called to assert the type of school that only teaches religious materials and is affiliated with a particular religion. Because a few years before this Arab School was established, since 1914 the Sister School run by the Catholic Mission in Sambas had begun its operation.

This Arab School was later renamed "al-Madrasah al-Sultaniyah al-Islamiyah" which means the "school attributed to the Sultan". The important question raised here is that why was the Arab School attributed to the Sultan, and which Sultan of Sambas does it refer to? The author of the manuscript said:

"The school was founded and grew with the grace and enthusiasm and excitement of His Majesty the late Sultan Muhammad Safiuddin. And His Majesty's money was used to pay the teachers' [salary]. Therefore, the school was named as "Al-Madrasah Al-Sultaniyah Al-Islamiyah" which meant the School which is attributed to the Sultan ". [12].

Based on the above texts, the use of Sultan's name for the name of the Arab School was due to the financing of education, especially for routine expenditures such as salaries of teachers which were funded by the Sultan. One decade since the establishment of this Arab School, the educational fees withdrawn from students were also no longer applied. Due to the enormous attention given by Sultan in facilitating the functioning of education in this school, the *Sultan* name was pinned on it.

Second, founder of the Arab School. This text clearly states that Sultan Muhammad Safiuddin II was the founder of the school. Throughout its history, the Kingdom of Sambas had two Sultans who used Muhammad Safiuddin's title. First, it was used by the founder of this kingdom, namely Raden Sulaiman, styled Sultan Muhammad Safiuddin I (in power 1631-1669) and Raden Afifuddin, styled Sultan Safiuddin II (in power from 1866 to 1922). If Sultan Muhammad Safiuddin I was said to be the Founder of the Kingdom of Sambas, then Sultan Muhammad Safiuddin II was titled the Father of the Kingdom of Sambas Development. During the reign of Sultan Safiuddin II, development was carried out almost in all sectors. As for the area of economic development, Sultan Safiuddin II fixed Sambas-Singkawang-Bengkayang road infrastructure. Such development in this area also included the construction of canals connecting one another, especially for villages located in the watershed. Spiritual development also did not escape the attention, among which was to establish this Arab School in the Kingdom of Sambas.

Third, the parties involved in the effort to establish the Arab School. Besides Sultan Safiuddin II as mentioned above, the most important figure in the establishment of this School was Raden Tumenggung and the 3rd *Maharaja Imam* of Sambas. Raden Tumenggung's Office was held by the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Sambas at that time, while the *Maharaja Imam* of Sambas was held by H. Muhammad Basiuni Imran.

The origin of this school began with the will of His Majesty Sultan Muhammad Safiuddin who had worked with all his mind to continue the work of the Late Sultan Muhammad Ali Safiuddin (when he was styled Raden Tumenggung) together with Tuan Haji Muhammad Basiuni Imran, Maharaja Imam Sambas. And first there was a meeting about founding a school at the call of the Maharaja Imam on the night of 11 Dzulqaidah 1332 at the House of the Tuan Imam Hamid of which nearly one hundred people attended. Then dozens of times, there were meetings with the will of Raden Tumenggung together with the Maharaja Imam attended by the *Wazirs*, *Khatibs*, *Imam*, *Datuk Kaya*, etc. [12]

In later developments, the process of establishing the Arab School was organized by a group called the Knowledge Group. This group was directly led by Maharaja Imam, Muhammad Basiuni. Furthermore, this group mobilized all resources by conducting meetings. The first meeting was held on 11th of Zulkaidah 1332 H / 30 September 1914 M in the house of Imam H. Hamid in Dagang Barat Village, Sambas with the number of invitations reached almost 100 people. After that, it was repeatedly attended by *Wazirs*, *Khatibs*, *Imam*, *Datuk Kaya*, etc. The high intensity of the meeting was due to the awareness that the efforts to develop education require the seriousness and commitment of many parties. Likewise, educational activities have long-term impacts on the society, so it needs to be carefully prepared.

Fourth, the establishment of the Arab School. The first day of the opening of an educational institution was a historic

momentum worthy of being recorded. But unfortunately, this important momentum escaped from the collective memory of this manuscript composer. In fact, he wrote the editorial: "Al-Madrasah al-Sulthaniyah is the name of the school, started opening on this ... day ... dated ... AH ... AD [12]. As it appears in its editorial order; on day, date, and year (Hijri and Gregorian) are left blank. It may be that the author deliberately did so in the hope of obtaining the addition of the *Maharaja Imam* of Sambas or the parties who knew exactly the timing of the establishment of this Arab School. Although the founding of this school was not explicitly mentioned, it was implicitly found in other parts of the manuscript that the school that became the pride of the Kingdom had begun in 1914 [12], exactly one year after H. Muhammad Basiuni Imran was appointed *Maharaja Imam* of Sambas and coincided with the establishment of Catholic Missionaries in Sambas.

Fifth, the Arab School curriculum. As the name implies, this school made Arabic alphabet and / or Arabic language its main subject in the curriculum. The classical system used by this school applied four grades (1-4) in its educational unit. Each class has its subjects set as follows: the first grade consists of the following subjects: (1) Qur'an; (2) *Fiqh*; (3) *Imla'*; (4) Arabic language; (5) *Hisab*; (6) *Qira'ah*; (7) *Kitabah*. The second grade includes: (1) Qur'an; (2) *Tajwid*; (3) *fiqh*; (4) *Imla'*; (5) Arabic language; (6) *Khat*; (7) *Hisab*; (8) *Fann al-Imla'*. Meanwhile, the subjects in the third grade include: (1) Qur'an; (2) *Tajwid*; (3) *fiqh*; (4) *Nahwu*; (5) *Imla'*; (6) *Insya'*; (7) *Hisab*; (8) Arabic language; (9) *Khat*; (10) *Hisab*. As for the fourth grade: (1) Al-Quran; (2) *Tajwid*; (3) interpretation of the Qur'an; (4) *Hadith*; (5) *Mustalah al-Hadith*; (6) *Fiqh*; (7) *Sharaf*; (8) *Nahwu*; (9) *Tawheed*; (10) *Imla'*; (11) *Insya'*; (12) *Tarikh*; (13) *Khat*; (14) Arabic language.

Considering the lessons set in the curriculum of this Arab School, it seems quite hard for elementary school aged children. However, this policy was apparently still made because the advanced educational institutions to study religion in Sambas were unavailable. For parents who come from the middle class, some of them sent their children to the Holy Land of Mecca to study and simultaneously perform the pilgrimage, some sent their kids to in Egypt.

This school was visited by His Excellency Resident B.W. When this school only was a year old when it was housed in the former Interior office next to ... [broken text, illegible] and he asked where are these lessons derived from and he checked the books? Then he ordered by saying that this school according to the textbooks may not be borne by its students except students who have graduated from HIS School and *Gubernumen* School. [12].

Sixth, the Arab School teachers. The Sultan school instructors are mostly from Madrasah graduates in Mecca and Egypt such as H. Muhammad Djabir, H. Ahmad Fauzi Imran, H. Abdurrahman Hamid, H. Ahmad Su'ud, and Muhammad Sirri Umar.

H. Muhammad Djabir has expertise in the field of *fiqh* and *hadith*. He had lived in Mecca for ten years (1304-1315 AH)

and studied from Sheikh Ismail Bali, Sheikh Zainuddin Sumbawa, and Sheikh Abdul Karim Banten (1) [13]. One of his works is entitled *Risalat al-Hajj*. Written in 1925. It was later published in the *al-Matba'ah al-Ahmadiyah* publisher of Singapore in 1932. This work contains practical guidance on the implementation of the pilgrimage staring right from the home. In addition, his position as the *Imam Maharaja* of Sambas also presented him with many questions asked for answers from him. One such question, for example, he once passed on to the *Maharaja Imam* H. Muhammad Basiuni Imran. After a written answer had been given, it was re-authorized by Imam Muhammad Djabir. He was also known as the most loyal figure to read al-Manar journals. This is evidenced by the many historical events of the Islamic world that he read from Al-Manar, then he copied into the diary [13].

H. Abdurrahman Hamid and H. Ahmad Suud had expertise in the field of *fiqh*. They studied at Al-Azhar University and Dar al-Dakwah wa al-Irsyad in Egypt together with Basiuni Imran and Fauzi Imran. He had studied with Muhammad Rasyid Rida, Ahmad Zankulani and other Arab scholars. In addition to being a teacher, Abdurrahman Hamid served as the Royal Imam, while H. Ahmad Su'ud is believed to hold the position of *penghulu* (head of Religious Office) in Singkawang, one of the districts of the Kingdom of Sambas.

Muhammad Sirri Umar was a graduate of the madrasah al-Sultaniyah who had a great talent in the field of Arabic. Therefore he was appointed as an auxiliary teacher to teach the science of *Nahwu* and *Saraf* at his almamater.

The position of the principal for the first time was entrusted to H. Ahmad Fauzi Imran, the younger brother of *Maharaja Imam* of Sambas, Basiuni Imran. A. Fauzi was a graduate of Al-Azhar University and Dar al-Dakwah wa al-Irshad in Egypt. But his leadership did not last long, due to the illness that ended his life [12]. Ahmad Fauzi was a cleric who mastered a number of foreign languages such as Arabic, English, and French. This is evidenced by a number of his books in Dagang Timur Village, Sambas. The cleric was also regarded as a forward-thinking and active figure in organization. One of the organizations he once led was the *Perkumpulan Jalan Kesempurnaan* [14]. After his death, Fauzi's position was replaced by H. Muhammad Djabir around 1921. Subsequently Djabir was replaced by H. Abdurrahman Hamid around 1926 because he was too old [12]. While the supervisor of this madrasah was the *Maharaja Imam* of Sambas.

Seventh, the Arab School financing. Financing is very important in education because it concerns the continuity of an educational institution. This is the case with this Arab School. From the beginning the problem of school financing was a crucial issue to solve. In the previous section it was pointed out that during the reign of Sultan Safiuddin II and Sultan Ali Safiuddin, this school was greatly aided by the financial support of the two sultans, but after both died, the financing of this school was entirely the responsibility of *Maharaja Imam* Muhammad Basiuni Imran.

Based on the SKMS manuscript, the Arab School funding source came from administration fees of marriage, divorce and reconciliation and charity.

This is the reason why marriage certificates issued by the district heads and the deputy were charged with rice submitted to the *Maharaja Imam* so that he will submit and deduct it for the school part of it. So the *Maharaja Imam* worked to collect the money for the foundation of the school and the various endeavors were undertaken. [12].

At the end of the above quotation there is a phrase "and various endeavors were undertaken", indicating that a number of efforts were taken by the Knowledge Group in the context of extracting financial resources other than income from the administration of marriage, divorce and reconciliation. The sources, based on the Journal of Baitul Mal of the Kingdom of Sambas, include: (1) School Endowments; (2) Rental of school gardens; (3) Donation of the Sultan of Sambas; (4) Public donations; (5) Student education contribution [15].

Based on the above description, the Arab School's financial resources were obtained from: endowment funds, fixed donations, administrative fees of marriage, divorce, and reconciliation, as well as compulsory education fees extracted from students.

Meanwhile, the expenditures of this Arab School include: (1) Salary of teachers; (2) Operational Cost of Knowledge Group; (3) Renovation of the Arab School building; (4) Purchase of learning resources such as the Qur'an and other books; (5) The purchase of consumables such as stone, pencil, ink, and wipes; (5) The purchase of school facilities and infrastructure such as chairs and school benches [15].

Eighth, community participation. The community's response to the Arab School was significant with the enthusiasm of parents in Sambas to send their children to this Islamic educational institution.

During the peak of this school, it opened a large number [classes] and Sambas City residents scrambling to put their children to study here with just little time this school had been running, then the reputation spread, and caught the attention of the natives. Until not only 4-5 people who entered. Because they really wanted the lessons taught in it. And there were also some students from the HIS School and students from the second grade asked to be admitted into it to become its students. [12]

The community's participation in this school in material form was shown in the form of donations and endowments that have been mentioned in the previous section. Concern for the Arab School is not only shown by society but also by the Kingdom itself. The above description has revealed the role of Sultan Safiuddin II and Sultan Ali Safiuddin who supported all the school finance especially teachers' salaries. In fact, the two sultans have an award in the form of cash to *Maharaja Imam* of Sambas, for his part in managing the Arab School [15]. Meanwhile, the *Wazir* (a high official) of the Kingdom of Sambas responsible for the Security Sector, *Pangeran Laksmada* Muhammadan donated his rubber farm to the Arab School. H. Hamid, the father of the *Imam Maharaja*,

Abdurrahman donated his coconut farm for the same benefit. Similarly, *Datuk Kaya* Muhammad Suud, who lent his own rented house for a place of study, while waiting for a new building ready to be used [12] [15].

Ninth, contribution of the Arab School. Observing the donation to this school would be easier if viewed from several aspects. (1) Socio-religious: the establishment of this school had given opportunity to the Sambas community to get formal education of Islamic religion. The duration of study time, place, teachers, and school curriculum were all well structured. This is reinforced by the religious background of Sambas society, making this Arab School's presence a long-awaited momentum for their children to study religion in a formal education institution [12]. Moreover, the instructors who taught here were prominent scholars of Middle Eastern graduates. (2) Socio-economic: the Arab school provided job opportunities for its graduates. For example, Mi'raj Djabir who graduated in 1926 was later appointed as a religious clerk of the Sambas Kingdom as a *penghulu* (head of religious office) in Bengkayang [16]. Similarly, Muhammad Sirri Umar was appointed a teaching assistant at a school where he once studied. (3) Socio-politics. The development of the Arab School curriculum in 1935 included, among others, lessons about nationalism. Since then, the School began to be directed as a medium for the development of nationalist insight. In line with what Tilaar [17] reported that at the time of the national awakening, education blended with the nationalist movement. When the Colonial Government apparatus began to suppress the nationalist movement, education was the most powerful means for channeling the ideals of independence.

The spirit of nationalism that reached this region encouraged the Arab School to become a more open educational institution. The national education developed by this school helped to prepare many cadres. Some Arab School teachers were members of political parties and movement activists at the time. For example, Murshid Idris was a member of Partai Indonesia Raya (Great Indonesia Party [Parindra]) of Sambas [18]. Meanwhile, Izzuddin Zubir was an activist of Persatuan Muslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Association [PERMI]), as well as Hamidi Abdurrahman who was active in Persatuan Bangsa Indonesia Sambas (the Unity of Indonesian Nation in Sambas [PERBIS]) [19]. In a number of important meetings, the movement's activists and party figures made the Arab School building a base for the struggle.

III. CONCLUSION

The precursor of the Arab School comes from the palace education program for the royal family. Over time, this educational institution developed into a formal educational institution. The tendency to make the palace an educational institution is in fact not a new practice. In the study of the history of Islamic education for example, major Islamic dynasties such as the Umayyad and Abbasid facilitated teachers (*muaddib*) to teach at the palace. However, in the context of West Borneo, the Kingdom of Sambas provides a unique example because the sultanate paid a great deal of attention to educational development compared to other Malay sultanates in the region.

As the name implies, this Arab School specialized in providing Islamic religious lessons to its students. Under the guidance of its teachers with the educational background from Mecca and Egypt, this school succeeded in preparing outstanding graduates. In later developments, this school implemented a more open system of education and even became the basis for national movement in the region, especially in Sambas. The running of this Arab School would not have been effective without the support of good financial management. Despite being without subsidies of the Colonial Government, the School had successfully managed its finances in an orderly and transparent manner through a royal treasury agency called the *Baitul Mal*. The prototype of the Arab School in Sambas later inspired the establishment of other (Islamic) religious schools in West Borneo.

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