

NATIVES ON TRIAL.

Missionary Speared.

ALLEGED PROVOCATION.

DARWIN, Thursday.

The trial commenced yesterday of aborigines charged with wounding with intent to murder James Alexander Robertson, a Methodist missionary, at Crocodile Island, in February last. Spears were thrown at the Rev. Mr. Webb and his assistant, Mr. Robertson, during a church service, from a distance of 25ft. One spear was thrown at the minister, but missed, and pierced a galvanised iron wall. Mr. Robertson was hit twice, and suffered deep gashes in one arm and his chest.

Counsel for the defence produced a telegram sent by the Rev. Mr. Jennison to the Government Resident stating that, in fairness to the aborigines accused, the Government should make inquiries as to provocative actions.

In evidence Robertson stated that he had administered punishment to one of the accused.

A native witness said he had used a stock-whip on the aborigines for certain offences, but no punishment had been meted out since the Rev. Mr. Watson left.

The case is proceeding. A nolle prosequi was entered in the case in which a native was charged with inciting the assault.

The three men were found guilty, and remanded for sentence.