

## **MISSIONARY SPEARED.**

### **NATIVE FOUND GUILTY.**

**DARWIN, June 8.**

The trial commenced to-day of aboriginals, charged with wounding with intent to murder James Alexander Robertson, Methodist missionary at Crocodile Island, in February last, by throwing spears at the Rev. Webb and his assistant, Mr. Robertson, during a church service, from a distance of 35ft. A spear was thrown at the Minister, but missed, and went a foot through a galvanised iron wall. Mr. Robertson was hit twice, and received deep gashes in his arm and chest.

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

Mr. Robertson, in the witness box, admitted he had administered punishment to one of the accused. A native witness said he had used a stockwhip on aboriginals for certain offences, but no punishment had been meted out since the Rev. Watson left.

The case is proceeding.

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

**DARWIN, June 9.**

The Mullingimbi case was continued in the Supreme Court to-day, when a native, Erranungan, was charged with spearing the Rev. Mr. Robertson.

Andrew, a mission boy, gave further evidence under cross-examination by Mr. Barratt. He said that two boys were hit by Mr. Robertson.

tion by Mr. Barratt. He said that two boys were hit by Mr. Robertson, on one occasion with a stockwhip. They were punished for running away from the boat. A boy who stole a water melon for tucker was expelled from the Island; another boy was expelled for playing with the girls. The method of expulsion was to chase the delinquent with a stockwhip to a point on the beach nearest the mainland, and compel him to swim across. Witness was employed in the blacksmith shop, and received instructions from Mr. Webb or Mr. Robertson regarding the work required. He apportioned it out, and saw it was done. He was a sort of No. 1 boss boy. Witness did not ascertain the identity of the natives in war paint until he heard them speak, or after their make-up had been removed.

Miclay, a mission boy, gave evidence Mr. Robertson came out of the door with a gun and fired a shot at Erranungan, but missed. Erranungan threw a spear and hit Mr. Robertson, who fell down. Witness picked him up, and carried him inside, but Mr. Robertson again emerged, and endeavoured to use the gun against the natives.

Mr. Barratt called no witnesses for the defence, and addressed the Court, emphasising the matter of infliction of punishment was not sanctioned by law. The missions were primarily established for the betterment of the aboriginal race, and at the same time they were being used in a trading concern, trepang fishing, which was a most profitable sideline. The system of punishment was started by Mr. Watson, and continued by Mr. Robertson, with or without the knowledge of the Rev. Mr. Webb. The law applied to every race, white and black alike. Mr. Barratt urged no

lay applied to every race, white and black alike. Mr. Barratt urged no spearman would have been there that day had Mr. Robertson's aim with a gun not been worse than the accused's aim with the spear. The matter was simply one of self defence. Mr. Webb had denied the knowledge of the stockwhip. Missions were likely to put themselves in a very serious position if floggings were resorted to. The natives on this mission station were obliged to work, yet subjected to a stockwhip; if such constituted the interpretation of the civilising of natives, the sooner they were abolished the better.

Mr. Braham characterised the address of counsel for the defence as most unfair. It was really a lecture upon morality. There had not been the slightest provocation for the attack. There was no doubt regarding the guilt of accused, and there was no evidence that the Rev. Jennison had despatched a telegram.

Accused was found guilty and remanded for sentence.

The charges against Mackarney and Dowarra are being proceeded with.

In the Supreme Court this afternoon, evidence was taken in the charge against Mararney and Dowarra, of having feloniously wounded, with intent to murder, James Alexander Robertson, at Mullingimbi Mission Station. Three mission boys, Kiyau, Andrew and Miolo, gave evidence. Mr. Barratt contended there was no evidence to connect either accused with the wounding, for which Erranungan had already been convicted. The Judge was satisfied the attack had been deliberately planned, for when the crowd assembled, the mission natives surrounded the house in the same manner as surrounding their quarry in pursuit of

house in the same manner as surrounding their quarry in pursuit of game. Both were convicted and remanded for sentence on Saturday morning.