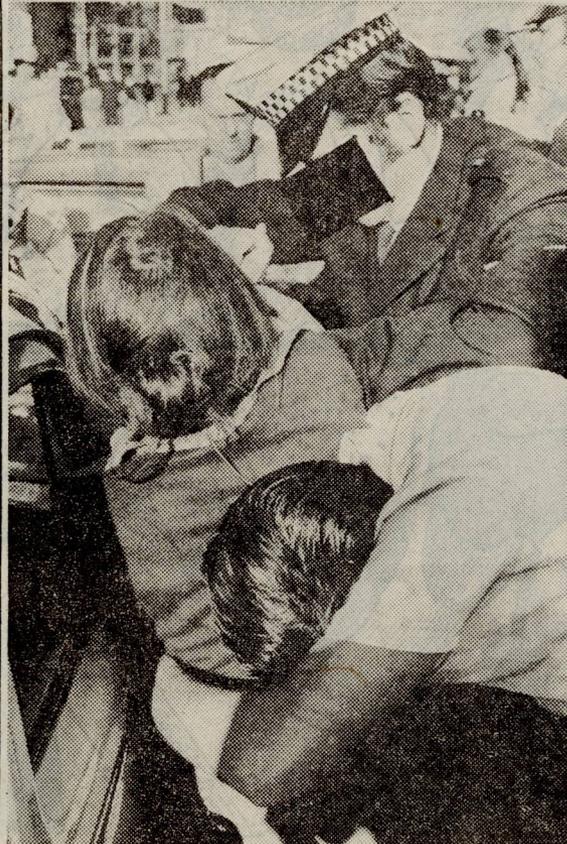


# First Tower Mill charge was a shocking blunder

A FEW weeks ago I was full of praise on this page for the way our police handled the mob in the city moratorium march. Today I am full of disgust for the same police over their behavior at the Varsity march and on Springbok night.



No shoulder number tab on the uniformed policeman . . . no face for the cameraman from his helper. This was a scene during one of the week's demos.

For a start, they let their Minister and Commissioner get down very badly. And they certainly played right into the hands of all those who have been crying out that the Government's State of Emergency was a dangerous thing.

Despite all the assurances by Mr. Hodges and Mr. Whitrod . . . despite all their talks directly to officers and men . . . despite all the actual training the police were given, the hard fact is that once they were turned loose they appeared to lose control — and they lost also the respect of a lot of people.

The police in a mob proved equally as dangerous as the demonstrators in a mob.

It appears that

in the police there is a smattering of types who get sadistic delight out of a head-on clash with Varsity students or other protesters.

*I have had reports by independent observers of sickening acts by some police near the Botanic Gardens and also outside the Tower Mill Motel where the Springboks were housed.*

That charge into the mob near the Trades Hall was utter stupidity. It is a wonder somebody was not killed because men, women and children were sent tumbling down a steep slope by the sheer weight of police numbers.

A lot of innocent bystanders, people who had no interest in Springboks or demonstrators, but who had gone along just to have a peep

at the show, were caught in that uniformed rush.

*Why that officer ordered his team to charge the mob standing on the footpath above the slope is a mystery.*

All it has done is to really stir up new hatred of our police, which is a damned shame at a time when their public image seemed to be on the improve.

One experienced Southern observer has described the

Tower Mill episode as the worst example of police brutality he has ever seen.

Something has got to be done immediately by the top police echelon to see there is no repetition of the nonsense.

*By all means be firm with flare throwers and other dangerous demonstrators, but for heaven's sake let there be some sanity in police ranks when they find themselves looking at a non-violent group.*

I get no pleasure out of writing this, because I fully appreciate our police in the present turmoil have a very difficult task.

But somebody has got to make it clear to every policeman — from inspectors down to probationaries—that even a State of Emergency gives no policeman the right to feel he can ride like a Mongol over the public.