



**Mobile Traffic
Section
motorcyclists
outside police
headquarters.**

force in 1883, was appointed Chief Commissioner. His term of office was interrupted by the police strike in November 1923 when 635 men refused duty. These men were not re-appointed.

Resigning in 1925, Mr. Nicholson was followed in office by Maj.-Gen. (later Field Marshal Sir Thomas) Blamey. One of his first reforms was the widening of the recruit training system. During 1926-27 the strength of the force was further increased by an additional 284 men.

Sir Thomas Blamey resigned in 1936. At the invitation of the Government of Victoria, Mr. A. M. Duncan, Chief Inspector of the London Metropolitan Police, undertook an investigation into the police organization in Victoria. His report set out his recommendations on the many reforms considered necessary. These recommendations were accepted by the Government and on Feb. 7, 1937 Mr. Duncan was appointed Chief Commissioner.

Mr. Duncan continued in office until January 1955 when he was succeeded by the present Chief Commissioner, Major-General Porter. Police strength at this time was its present level, although a further increase is being sought.

Wireless Patrol

An eight cylinder Lancia tourer was the first police patrol car in Australia to be fitted with a wireless receiving set. The seven valve set was specially devised for the Victoria Police following experiments by patrol driver Senior Constable (later Inspector) F. W. Downie. The Lancia was one of two tourers used by the Force for patrol duties of the Melbourne and metropolitan area.

The building of the set in 1923 followed earlier experiments in using radio telephony, but speech distortion was so bad that the idea was discarded for telegraphy.

The first Victorian policeman to take a Morse message in a cruising patrol car was Cst. (later Inspector) William Hutchison, a certified ex-Postmaster General Department telegraphist.

In 1926, following further experiments by a Constable Canning, the patrol cars were fitted with transmitting sets and the Force's own transmitter—a two kilowatt set—was built at Russell Street Police Headquarters. It was housed in a blue-stone building which had served as Melbourne's first police station.

When the building was dismantled and re-erected in the ward of Police Headquarters it was the humble beginning of the present day D-24, with its 130-foot radio mast and master control board—the "nerve centre" of the force's communications organization.

The motorized strength of the force at that time was two Lancias, a Dodge (used by the Chief Commissioner), a Palm (built from Ford T parts, and used by the C.I.B.), two prison vans, a Ford and an Italia (the Italia's body was formerly used as a horse drawn van and its most notorious prisoner was bushranger Ned Kelly, Australia's Jesse James).

That year, 1926, the Wireless Patrol was given the first cars of a fleet of Daimlers. In 1937, four Alvis cars were added but proved unsatisfactory for patrol work. They were later replaced by Ford Mercury cars, and these have been re-