

ND SOUTH

Nelson CPA clock up and running

The Nelson Chief Post Office clock, silent for the last 12 years, sprang into life again this month and is more prominent and better than ever.

Originally built by Joyce and Co. in 1906, the clock has been restored by local retired watchmaker, Henry Rodgers, and placed in the CPO tower high above the city.

Henry estimated that preparing and installing the clock involved a total of 960 hours work. He paid tribute to the contribution of the late Mr Ian Birt who had stripped down the clock from the old tower.

"Plans were made of the whole mechanism and it went together again very easily," said Henry. "Ian was very diligent in preparing a catalogue and photographing everything."

was delighted with the challenge.

Preparing the clock for the new tower involved new work in three main areas — changing from manual to electric winding, elimination of the pendulum, and making new dials and hands.

Inventive mind

Fortunately Henry had the inventive mind, the skills and the specialised machine tools needed to overcome the many interesting problems he encountered.

The old winding mechanism required a 16m weight well and very heavy weights on steel lines. For the new electric

Instead of the pendulum which had been 2.5m long and weighed 75kg, Henry had the idea of using a tiny synchronous instrument motor geared down to the speed of the pendulum. This worked perfectly, with the clock keeping perfect time now controlled by the 50 cycles of mains power.

Larger 2.4m dials with 0.3m high Roman numerals incorporate the original dials but are easier to read on the higher tower. The new hands are also longer and made from stainless steel instead of copper.

The five bells for the strike and chime were lifted into position during May and mounted on the original Australian Jarrah frame timbers. Henry took great care to use everything he could from the original clock, and Nelson can now boast one of the few tower clocks in the country

