

Canadian Missionary Link

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A Call to a Week of Prayer

Please read again the Article under this heading in the January Link, on page 114, and with it the following explanations by Mr. Haddow. Note again also the picture of this unfinished chapel on page 115 of the January Link.

Let us not forget that the first seven days of February have been set apart as a time of special prayer that the hindrances to completing this Chapel may be removed. Baptist women all over Canada are asked to co-operate in united prayer for La Paz at this time.

THE DIFFICULTY RE THE BUILDING OF THE MISSION CHAPEL IN LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

First.—We purchased the lot from the municipality in May, 1920. After considerable delay due to the "crookedness" of the officials of the municipality, we were given the deed in January, 1921, and shortly we were given "Judicial Possession," that is to say one of the judges examined the deed and having satisfied himself that all was correct he called on those who had property rights adjacent, to present themselves on the ground at a certain day and hour to lodge any protests they might have. Nobody came, neither was there any protest, and so the Judge took me by the hand and in the name of the Republic confirmed me as the owner of the lot. (It had to be purchased in my name as we had then no power of attorney from the Board. The deed, however, stated that it was purchased for the Canadian Baptist Foreign Mission Board.) Plans were prepared and finally approved by the Board and

then application was made to the municipality for permission to build, and the proper fee paid. In October, 1921, the Municipal Engineer told me that I was free to go ahead and he sent one of his assistants to put in the stakes showing the limits. He has since confirmed this permission in writing. Without further delay we began to prepare for building and continued till forced to suspend operations by command of the municipal police under orders of the Mayor of La Paz, Dr. Abel Iturralde.

Second.—The opposition is based on a technicality, but is strictly legal. Although the practice of the past twelve years has been for the Municipal Engineer to issue all permits the law says that the Municipal Council must approve. The Mayor has refused to deal with this aspect of the question, and either refuse the application or approve of it. If he refused the application he would have to base it upon some infringement of a regulation, or a law, and the building is within all these. He refuses to approve it because the ecclesiastical authorities have said we ought not to be allowed to put up such a building—that is to say a place of worship for Protestants. They have tried to make capital out of the proximity of the Chapel to a famous, or at least to them famous, image of the Virgin in the old hospital church.

Third.—The Constitution of the Republic "permits the public worship of all other religions" besides the Roman Catholic. It also gives us the right of peaceable reunion and guarantees us the right to hold private property which is not subject to confiscation nor to expropriation except for public purposes and with due compensation.

A. H. Haddow.