

RECEIVERS:

In the Superior Court at Hartford, Conn., an order was issued on Saturday last discharging the receivers of the Charter Oak Life Insurance Company, of Hartford, the company's affairs now being wound up. The Charter Oak was adjudged insolvent in 1886, and receivers were appointed. In January, 1897, the *Insurance Journal* of Hartford summed up the results of the receivership which had been lasted ten years as follows: "The expenses of the receivership have been about \$250,000, an average of \$25,000 a year. These expenses were divided as follows, making a small allowance for closing up: Clerical expenses, \$21,000, legal, \$30,000, receiver's salaries, \$80,000, incidentals, \$120,000. The policyholders will get something over half a million, so that the receivers will have got out of an estate which was valued when they took it at \$2,500,000, about \$750,000, at an expenditure of thirty-three and a third per cent. of the receipts."

THE FINANCES OF CUBA.

There is one element in the Cuban question which has been almost wholly ignored, although upon it hinges considerations which are presenting formidable difficulties in the settlement of the dispute between Spain and the United States, relating to that island. Politicians have concerned themselves mainly with the question as to the obligation resting upon a democratic country, like the United States to interfere between a nation determined to keep one of its colonies under its absolute sway, when the people of such colony are fighting for independence, and those of its colonial subjects who are in rebellion against continued subjection to that nation. Strong ground has been taken by a majority in the Senate, and in Congress, who are supported by most of the United States newspapers in favour of armed support being given to a people on this side the Atlantic who are in open revolt against the alleged tyranny of an European monarchy. We have before pointed out that an effort has been made in the States to arouse a movement there in favour of the annexation of Canada on the same ground as the movement on behalf of Cuba, viz.: on the plea that we Canadians ought to be liberated from subjection to the British Crown. Although this idea in relation to Cuba is extremely popular in the States, where monarchical government is so generally regarded as essentially opposed to popular rights, it is not supported by those in whom are chiefly vested the financial interests of the country. The other plea, that humanity demands the interference of the States in order to put an end to the cruelties incident to a rebellion, has caused the populace generally to call for the armed intervention of the United States on behalf of the sufferers. This plea also is not endorsed by American financiers; indeed, several leading journals charge the Cuban insurgents with committing the worst cruelties of the rebellion. Although the pressure of national feeling created by the political and humanitarian cries is so strong, the

financiers of the United States are looking at war from a business standpoint, as are those also of Europe. As the power of money is almost supreme in a dispute which is liable to disturb the finances of the world, if it leads to hostilities, the question has come to the front as to the financial relations of Cuba, and of Spain, and of the obligations under which Cuba rests directly and indirectly in regard to the debt it owes, or for which it is held to be responsible. If the States seized Cuba, as would probably occur, would such seizure lead to the repudiation of Cuban indebtedness? Or, would the States guarantee such debts as the island is responsible for in order to assist the Cubans in establishing an independent government? These are very grave and pivotal questions.

The conquest of Cuba by the States would lead to the repudiation of whatever obligations the Colony was under to Spain. The hostile seizure of Cuba would also practically release Spain from its obligation to the island. Cuban bonds, to a large extent, would become worthless, when the revenues for paying interest thereon, and ultimately the principal, were no longer under the control of the government by whom they were issued. Another section of Cuban bonds issued by Spain would become a very grave embarrassment to that nation when its Cuban resources were wholly alienated. It is understood that a considerable amount of such bonds are held outside Spain, a circumstance which is regarded by some as a reason for the intervention of some European powers in the interests of bondholders. The chief part of the debt of Cuba consists of three loans, which amount to about \$449,000,000. These obligations require \$17,540,000 in gold to meet coupons and sinking funds of two issues, and a further sum of \$26,300,000 in pesetas for coupons and sinking fund of 5 per cent. bonds, which were issued under a guarantee of Spanish Customs. It is, however, stated by the official press of Spain that a further sum of \$70,000,000 is due by the Cuban Treasury, making the total obligations of Cuba about \$519,000,000, or just double the public debt of Canada. A condition like this throws light on the suggestion that Cuba be purchased for \$200,000,000. Suppose Spain were to sell out for that sum, and hand Cuba over to the States, what would become of the enormous balance of Cuba's debts amounting to \$319,000,000 in excess of the purchase money? In what position would Cuba be in to have its independence burthened with a debt of \$200,000,000, for, of course, the United States would not pay all that money, or guarantee it, as a present to Cuba. The money would be raised by a special issue of bonds, and their interest, and a sinking fund, would be drawn from the Customs revenues of the emancipated Colony. To secure the due payment of these, the States would either have to trust wholly to the honour of the new masters of Cuba, a very dubious policy, or the States would have to exercise some control over the collection of Cuban customs, as Great Britain has done in China, or the island would have to be incorporated