OUR PACIFIC BABY.

About three months hence, a new baby will be born into the sisterhood of nations. It will be the Commonwealth of the Philippines. On July 4th, 1946, they will celebrate their independence under a Constitution and a form of government patterned upon that of the United States. They will have a President, a Vice President, a Supreme Court and a law-making body which differs from our Congress in that it will have but one branch instead of two and will be known as the National Assembly. While they will paddle their own canoe from then on, the United States will be in the stern end of the canoe, giving a lift now and then when the going gets a bit difficult.

A BIT OF RETROSPECT.

It's interesting to look back a bit on the history of the Philippines. We took over these 7083 scattered islands in 1898 as a result of our war with Spain. With patience and benevolent guidance, they moved forward in the field of both agriculture and industry to the point where our annual trade with the Islands totals about 250 million dollars per year. The soil is rich and the climate is tropical. It is a fruitful area for coconut, coconut oil, sugar, rice, hemp, rare hardwoods, rubber and many other items which are not produced in the United States and it is quite obvious that we shall remain the best customer of the Philippines even as they will remain a good customer for the products of this country. I can well remember those high school days some 30 or more years ago when the favorite high school topic of debate was: Resolved that the Philippines should be given independence at once. It was a worthy and expansive subject on which a young debater could speak with feeling as he explored the exploitation of a weak and helpless people or on the other side of the subject, pointed out the danger of turning loose this excellent military base right under the nose of Japan. And now, at long last, independence will become a reality but it will not terminate certain responsibilities which we still must discharge.

WAR DAMAGE COMMISSION.

As you so well know, indescribable damage was done in the Philippines by war. First there was the ruthless destruction by the Japs. Secondly, there was the destruction which we of necessity had to inflict to prevent property that might be useful in the prosecution of war from falling into Japanese hands. Finally, there was the damage committed by the Japs before we forced them out of the island. It has been estimated that total damage to property of all kinds, public, private and religious will total at least 800 million dollars. This problem of rehabilitation is being approached from two standpoints. First is the proposal to appropriate $330 million dollars out of the U.S. Treasury to compensate those who suffered from destruction of property as a result of enemy attack or by persons cooperating with the enemy or by our own armed forces. If we receive any indemnities from the Japanese, they will be credited to this account and if we receive more than 330 million, one half of the balance will go to the Philippines until all estimated war damages are paid. In addition, it is proposed to appropriate an additional 120 million to restore and improve public property and public services such as roads, port and harbor facilities, municipal property and the improvement of public health. Unless this aid is extended to the 16,000,000 Filipinos who occupy the islands, our Pacific baby might have a difficult time weathering the internal and external storms that are the lot of any independent nation.