The forty-ninth meeting of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales was held at the Ministry of Health, on Friday, July 25th, Sir Wilmot P. Herrington, K.C.M.G., C.B., Chairman of the Council, presiding.

The 1924 Register.

The copy of the 1924 Register was on the table, including the names of Nurses registered up to December 31st, 1923, and stated by the Chairman to be nearly 33,000.

Correspondence.

The Minutes of the last meeting having been read and signed, the following letters were reported.

Letters from the Minister of Health.

1. Letter from the Ministry of Health, dated June 25th, 1924, enclosing a copy of the Rules framed by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales with respect to the Uniform and Badge which may be worn by Registered Nurses, endorsed with the approval of the Minister of Health, dated June 24th, 1924.

2. Letter from the Minister of Health, dated July 11th, 1924, to the Chairman of Council:—

Dear Sir Wilmot,

The revision of the draft rules relating to future admissions has now been completed, and I hope shortly to be able to ask you to come here to discuss certain drafting amendments which our legal advisers think necessary. But these rules involve an important point of policy which threatens to give rise to unexpected difficulties. The rules, as they stand, provide for a three-years' course in a complete school and a four-years' minimum in combined schools. It has been strongly represented to the Minister that the four years required in combined schools is inevitably entails some interruption of studies, but the addition of a wider perspective that among the smaller hospitals that four years' minimum will make the recruitment of a decent type of probationer difficult, if not impossible, and that affiliation may break down as a consequence. It is recognised that transfer from one institution to another inevitably entails some interruption of studies, but the addition of a whole year or a full-time course in a complete school, and a four-years' minimum in combined schools, is to be deprecated. A three-years' course in complete schools is considered to be sufficient to make the students proficient in the knowledge and skills required for the profession, and it is understood that the case which the affiliation scheme was primarily intended to meet is the case of those hospitals which have such an unequal distribution of beds between medical and surgical cases that they could not by themselves afford the probationer a sufficient range of experience. If the Council's object is to combine a hospital with a preponderance of medical beds with another having a preponderance of surgical beds, it is not clear that there is a logical case for a four-years' combined training. It would be different if the intention was to compensate for insufficiency in the constituent units, but it is understood that the Council do not intend to recognises as units of a combined school hospitals in which the training is below the normal standard of efficiency.

Before coming to a definite decision on this question the Minister would be glad to be furnished with a further expression of the Council's views in the light of the considerations above indicated. While he is in sympathy with the desire of the Council to raise the general standard of education in nursing, he is of opinion that this must necessarily be a gradual process, and he trusts the Council will bear in mind the importance of proceeding by stages, and will not press him to sanction changes which might add appreciably to the difficulties with which the smaller nurses' training schools are already faced.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) L. G. Brock.

Sir Wilmot Herrington, K.C.M.G., C.B.