

Home truths for the new partner

'WELL, now, Dr Sukha — if you're going to join us, you'll be wanting to see the surgery.

'Eventually, of course, you'll be expected to buy a share from the outgoing partner.' (He's already threatening legal action if we don't give him his money soon.) 'But I don't believe in making you fork out such a large sum until you reach parity.' (However, you may have to, because the other partners aren't interested and I'm already in. hock up to my eyeballs.)

'Parity? Well, you'd be an assistant for three months,' (plus a bit more, if we can swing it without you noticing) 'and then reach parity in three years.' (Give or take.)

'Yes, of course there'll be a partnership agreement — I'll get the solicitor to draw one up' (some day). 'Oh yes, we have one at the moment.' (It's just that nobody's seen it since 1963 — otherwise we'd have been able to stop the last partner running off with most of the practice equipment and setting up shop across the road.)

'Practice accounts? Here they are... well, I know they're not the *actual* accounts — I had the practice manager draw up this abstract... I see what you mean — four lines could be a bit *too* abstract.

'Now, this will be your room' (assuming none of the other partners want a room of

their own. I don't see why they should — they're women).

'No, we are a bit short on consulting rooms. This could easily be an extra one — it's the health visitor's at present.' (And you just try shifting her, mate.) 'Yes, you *could* divide this big one into two, but it's my room.

'And of course we have a very nice consulting suite here, complete with a room we could use for treatment.' (No point in telling him we can't use it because it's let to the hypnotherapist. The rent is useful.)

'Yes, there's a housekeeper, though she's near retiring age now' (If only we could get her to retire).

'What do you mean you don't think you're interested? You've been talking to the last partner? Well, that's just typical of you young doctors — you want to come in and change everything overnight!

'The last man thought like that, and it took him 11 years to realise that you can't...'