## Editors' note

## Wearing coloured glasses and sitting on the fence

In an extraordinary commentary authored by its science editor, R. Ramachandran, The Economic Times (10 June 1995) has accused the editors of this journal of 'condoning plagiarism' and advocating 'cut and paste research' in their treatment of the 1983 R. Vijayaraghavan paper on 'Magnetic behaviour of RRh<sub>3</sub>B<sub>2</sub> ternary borides' (Curr. Sci., Vol. 68, No. 10, 25 May 1995). Using selective quotations from the editorial, the editors' note and a private letter from the editors to the individuals concerned, the Economic Times charges the editors of Current Science with 'viewing plagiarism



through coloured glasses' and labels the journal as a 'fencesitter'.

While we do not wish to be involved in a prolonged controversy on this issue, we would like to emphasize that we view charges of plagiarism and unethical practices seriously and at no stage was it our intention to 'condone' unacceptable practices. We intend to be vigilant, but this is a task in which we seek the support of authors, reviewers and readers. In the specific case at issue, letters from all concerned parties were sought and printed, after prolonged correspondence, following which we have decided to decline further communication on this particular paper.

It is not the function of this journal to pass judgements on such cases after 'appointing inquiry committees'; that is the job of administrators of scientific institutions. In all such situations, those accused of misconduct must be given a fair chance to present their cases before an impartial and properly constituted group of peers. Journal editors can hardly arrogate to themselves the powers of such a body. Publication of relevant correspondence from all concerned allows the readers to come to their own conclusions. This is precisely the course followed by *Current Science*.

P. BALARAM S. RAMASESHAN