

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

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A PLEA FOR TOLERANCE

Sir,—You did well to ban further discussion on the classical v. jazz argument, and it is to be hoped that both sides have now had time to reflect on their attitude, and, perhaps, see the wisdom of combining their efforts, eliminating their extremism, and directing their energies towards raising the general level of broadcast programmes.

The great majority of listeners want good entertainment and they like to hear "musical" music, classical, jazz, and in between, but they do not like the high proportion of rubbish which is broadcast under all headings. Far too many programme compilers seem to think that any music which is played in slow tempo is "classical" and that any collection of notes thrown together accompanied by banging of drums is "jazz," and as a consequence people are aroused to a pitch of fury at the insult to their intelligence. Who can blame them?

But it is not only in musical items that rubbish offends, some of the plays are just as bad. There is a class of listener to plays (comparable with the jazz extremists) who dote on the sentimental absurdities of "Betty and Bob," or the endless platitudes of "The House of Peter McGregor." But the majority of listeners, because they have no grasp of the American background of these features prefer the English atmosphere of "Tusitala" or "The Lutene's Gold," both able examples of New Zealand productions. But no broadcaster will ever succeed in pleasing all the people, and so long as noisy minorities persist in demanding more of their particular choice of this or that the programmes will continue to be unbalanced.

The obvious way to improve programmes is for the warring factions to call a truce, decide to show a little tolerance for the others, and agree to listen to the other fellow's item if they are good samples of their class. If, instead of attacking their fellow listeners the "jazz" people will demand from the broadcasters that only good jazz be put over and the "classical" folk do likewise, the ordinary citizen will get some peace and perhaps have to listen to less rubbish.—J.S.L. (Upper Hutt).

ANCESTORS

Sir,—In a recent issue of your journal a correspondent, "Neutral," claims a semi-royal ancestry tracing back 2,000 years. I am surprised that he is so moderate in his claim. While he was about it he might have mentioned "Noah," or if he had been really ambitious, even "Adam." Science traces the common ancestry of the human race back to pre-historic sub-men who roamed the forest and probably slept in trees so we all have that in common.

I should like "Neutral" to consider the following passages written by W. Dodgson Bowman, author of "The Story of Surnames": "It is rare that direct descent through male issue continues to be unbroken for more than two or three centuries. Although William the Conqueror conferred 20 earldoms among the leaders of his army which fought at Senlac and helped him complete the conquest of England, not one of these peerages exists to-day. Nor do any of those given by his successors William Rufus, Henry I., Stephen, Henry II., Richard I. or John. All the honours conferred by the Norman and Angevin kings in the 150 years between 1066 and 1216 have vanished. All the dukedoms with the exception of Norfolk, Somerset and Cornwall have perished.

The only marquises older than George III. (1760-1820) are those of Winchester and Worcester, the latter being merged in the dukedom of Beaufort. In the House of Lords to-day there

is not a single male descendant of the barons who were chosen to enforce that monument of English freedom—Magna Charta. Nor is there in the Upper House a single male descendant of the barons who fought at Agincourt in 1415. There is only one family in the whole realm of Great Britain and Ireland—Wrotesley—which has a male descendant from the date of the institution of the Garter in 1349."

It would be interesting to know by what method "Neutral" has managed to trace his ancestors back to the year 60 B.C.—L. COONEY (Mt. Eden).

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