

Now, for a time the Brains Trust broke through this tradition. In its early days when the Trust was comparatively unimportant, we said what we liked and answered questions on religion and politics. Presently religion dropped out altogether — under pressure, the B.B.C. made a clean breast of this — and the questions on politics grew fewer and fewer, although the B.B.C. never admitted that there was a virtual ban on political discussion. Finally, a point was reached at which not even the mildest of political questions could be ventured upon. Thus, to cite a couple of examples that came within my own experience, where dozens could be given, the Brains Trust was not allowed to answer the questions, "What are the causes of anti-Semitism?" "What is the difference between a Conservative, a Liberal, a Socialist, and a Communist?" Meanwhile the B.B.C. was giving itself marks for permitting on the Brains Trust free discussion.

Howard Thomas is, no doubt, right in thinking that the popularity of the Brains Trust was largely due to the interplay of personalities, but, as the hubbub increased, one was bound to ask oneself, popularity to what end? And, for me, the end was education. The Brains Trust served this end by virtue of its ability to guide listeners through the rapids of controversy and to plunge them at last into the dark and bracing waters of thought. I venture, then, to claim that to an institution which has increasingly come to equate controversy with sin, the Brains Trust has done service by bringing back something of the great English tradition of discussion, disagreement, plain speaking, even on occasion of invective.

*(Britain's Brains Trust, by Howard Thomas, is available through your A.E.W.S. Library.)*



By Sgt. F. W. Burton.

"Don't shoot, it might be the Camouflage Officer!"



By Sgt. F. W. Burton.

"Then my skipper yelled, Right-oh, George, let 'er have it!"