

# Contents

<i>Preface to the fifth edition</i>	8
<i>Preface to the sixth edition</i>	9
<i>Preface</i>	10
<b>1 Describing the British Constitution</b>	11
<b>2 The Westminster model</b>	16
<b>3 Forces of change</b>	23
<b>4 British government today</b>	36
<b>5 Political leadership – producing a Prime Minister</b>	45
The process of selection within the parties – The	
role of the Crown – The causes and effects of the	
two-party system –	
The reasons for changes in voting behaviour –	
The character of	
British political leadership	
<b>6 Political leadership – the strength of the Prime</b>	
Minister	62
Party loyalty, the whips and patronage – Support	
of his colleagues, the Cabinet and the civil	
service – Right to choose the date of general elections	

## 6 Contents

### 7 Political leadership – the limitations on the Prime Minister's power

75

Limitations of party loyalty and Cabinet control –

The party outside Parliament as a constraint –

Governing through the House of Commons –

Governing through the civil service – Relations with the pressure groups – The mass media

### 8 Political leadership – can the Prime Minister be sacked?

97

Strength of a Labour leader – Strength of a

Conservative leader

### 9 The leadership and its relations with the electorate; the state and the citizen

103

Politicians and the public – Parties and electors –

Contacts through officials and pressure groups –

Opinion polls – By-elections – Referenda –

Personal contacts – The public's reactions to politics – Direct action – Why do people obey the government? – Personal freedom – The place of the courts – Public inquiries and administrative tribunals – The ombudsman – Enforcing the law: the army and the police

### 10 Governing through Parliament

142

The role of Parliament – How the executive gained control of Parliament – The legislative process – Authorizing public expenditure and taxation – Pressing the government from the

floor of the House – Pressing the government:  
upstairs and informal methods – Standing and select  
committees – Televising the House of Commons –  
The House of Lords – The influence of Parliament

# **11 Governing through the Whitehall departments** 179

A highly centralized country – The convention of  
ministerial responsibility – The Northcote–  
Trevelyan principles – Departmental  
organization and the Treasury – Criticisms of the  
civil service: its relations with ministers –  
Criticisms of the civil service: its administrative  
methods – The civil service and Parliament – The  
case for political advice

# **12 Government outside Whitehall** 198

The nationalized industries – Local government:  
its structure and weaknesses – Regionalism and  
devolution – Northern Ireland

# **13 The direction of change: the attitudes of the parties** 225

Away from the Westminster model towards  
what? – The political parties and the community  
– The Labour Party – The Conservative Party –  
The SDP, Liberals and Nationalists –  
Conclusion: no clear direction

*Further reading* 247

*Index* 249