Business and Politics in Britain

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Business and Politics in Britain

Second Edition

Wyn Grant

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For Sophia, Rosalind and Amelia

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Preface

It is now over twenty years since David Marsh and I travelled as postgraduate students from Exeter to Bristol to interview the regional office of the Confederation of British Industry for an article on that organisation we were writing to fill a puzzling gap in the political science literature. That was the start of what has proved to be an enduring interest in the relationship between business and politics, most recently extended to Russia and East-Central Europe. Over the past twenty years, I have acquired so many intellectual debts that it would be impossible to acknowledge them all. For the second edition of this book, the Nuffield Foundation awarded me a grant to conduct further interviews with business persons, business association officials, civil servants and others in London and Brussels. It was pleasant to meet some long established contacts again, some now in much more senior positions than when I first interviewed them, but also to meet some of the new participants in the world of business–government relations.

The first edition of this book was stimulated by my participation in a major international comparative project, co-ordinated by Wolfgang Streeck and Philippe Schmitter, on the organisation of business interests. I have continued to keep in contact with many of the participants in this project who have formed an informal network of individuals with broad interests in the area of the relationship between business and government. The study of business–government relations is a growing subject all over the world, and I am grateful to the academics and business persons who have sent me books, articles and papers they have written in the area.

The whole book has been thoroughly revised, but one of the chapters in the book that has required particularly extensive re-writing is that on the European Community, and I am grateful to Mike Cockburn and Jane Sargent for their extensive and helpful comments on earlier versions of this chapter. They bear no responsibility for its contents.

The University of Warwick has continued to provide an excellent intellectual environment for work concerned with business and government. I am particularly grateful to my colleagues in the Department of Politics and International Studies for their support and encouragement which has enabled me to combine continuing to research and write with my role as departmental chair. Special thanks are due to Professor Barry Buzan for his good advice and to the department's secretaries: Iris Host, Dorothy Foster and Linda Freeman.

Last but not least, thanks are due to my wife, Maggie, and to Sophia, Rosalind and Amelia for their tolerance, common sense and good humour. It is easy to become too preoccupied with large firms, and Ros's job as a junior manager in a small business has helped me to keep in mind the special challenges and problems facing smaller businesses.

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