This chapter considers the nature and roles of backbench Members of Parliament (MPs) as well as their impact and influence, placing emphasis on the Backbench Business Committee. The term ‘backbench’ refers to where the MPs or peers sit in the House of Commons — behind those with either ministerial frontbench or shadow ministerial frontbench positions. The definition of a backbencher holds in many other parliamentary systems where the executive is drawn from the legislative branch (for example, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia). However, emphasis on the role of backbenchers might vary depending on the parliamentary system. The chapter discusses the role of backbenchers in the UK Parliament, such as supporting their party; scrutinizing government; representing and furthering the interests of their constituency and constituents; contributing to policy development; and promotion of public understanding.
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