

Part 1. Roles of Labour Relations Commissions in Japan's Labour-Management Relations

Labour Relations Commissions (LRCs) in Japan are tripartite independent administrative organizations that consist of members representing public interests, employers and employees. LRCs have two primary missions: reconciling labour disputes, and examining unfair labour practices. The LRC scheme started 60 years ago when Trade Union Law became effective in March 1946. This section explains the historical background, focusing on the roles that LRCs have been playing to date.

I Trend of Labour Relations Adjustment Cases

1 Labour disputes immediately after WWII

When the LRC system started in 1946, Japan saw harsh conflicts between labour and management because the nation suffered economic hardships and political turmoil immediately after WWII. At that time, Japan saw frequent, long-term and antagonistic labour disputes on wage hikes or personnel reduction. LRCs mainly worked on reconciling these labour disputes by acting as the conciliator.

In addition, as LRCs at that time handled labour disputes in both the private and public sectors, LRCs adjusted labour disputes ex officio, or based on applications made by contesting parties, or requests from the Prime Minister, prefectural governor or GHQ. In particular, the Central Labour Relations Commission (CLRC) adjusted and quickly solved many labour disputes in the energy industry (coal and electricity), which was essential for Japan's industrial revival.

Subsequently, the government set up the National Personnel Authority as the central government's personnel coordination agency for central government workers engaged in administrative work (non-industrial civil services), while establishing the Public Corporations Labour Relations Commission for workers of public enterprises (Japan National Railways, Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Public Corporation, and Japan Monopoly Corporation) and government workers engaging in industrial civil services (such as postal services and forest affairs). These organs handled labour disputes in their responsible areas.

In 1959, the "Mitsui Miike Coal Miners' Strike" occurred as a large-scale and serious post-war labour dispute to oppose personnel cutback and continued for almost a year. As a



Central Labour Relations Commission proposed a conciliation plan. (Mitsui Miike Coal Miners' Strike in March 29, 1960)