

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)

CLRC ex officio acted as conciliator five times, the strike finally terminated and subsequently, employers and employees started to form rather cooperative relations with each other in Japan, shifting away from antagonistic relations.

2 Wage adjustment through the annual spring labour offensive

With the Japanese economy growing sharply since the mid-1950s, workers started their labour movement, called the "annual spring labour offensive." The annual spring labour offensive had significant impacts on Japan's wage-setting practices until the 1980s and played a role in distributing the fruits of Japan's economic growth.



The annual spring labour offensive (in March 26, 1974) [In Hibiya Park, Tokyo] (Photograph from the Kyodo News)

The annual spring labour offensive is Japan's unique wage adjustment system in which trade unions in each industry concurrently make

their wage hike demands in springtime (February to April), negotiate with their employers with instructions from their superior organizations (such as the National Center), and pull out a response from their employers. Usually, metal, electric and other major industrial sectors of the International Metal worker's Federation-Japan Council (IMF-JC) first gained wage hikes, which then spread out to major private firms and subsequently influenced wage hikes in private railways, and public enterprises such as JNR and postal services. Such wage hikes further influenced the wage hike level for small- and medium-sized enterprises and unorganized workers. In addition, the annual spring labour offensive also influenced the National Personnel Authority's recommendation regarding the salary level for central government workers.

The annual spring labour offensive started in 1955 when eight industrial trade unions started a joint wage hike movement. The movement subsequently expanded in 1956, absorbing JNR and some other public sector trade unions. The wage hike level achieved through the private railway's strike used to serve as a benchmark for the overall wage hike level and in this manner, the CLRC reconciles a private railway's strike almost every year.

In 1964, public corporations' trade unions (such as the National Railway Workers' Union) started a half-day strike in a similar manner to private railway's trade unions. The meeting between Ikeda (Prime Minister) and Ohta (Chairman, General Council of Trade Unions of Japan) confirmed the principle to determine public worker's wage hikes in line with the private sector's wage hike level. Henceforth, the annual spring labour offensive turned into a joint wage-hike movement of the public and private sectors. Private railway trade unions and the JNR union jointly enhanced their

"Transport General Strike" strategy. During the 1974 annual spring labour offensive, Japan suffered post-oil-crisis inflation, while the FPCGE (Federation of Public Corporation and Government Enterprise Workers' Unions, the organization of trade unions in public enterprises) intended to regain their right to strike. In this context, the Transport Strike strategy reached its peak with JNR's 5-day strike (110 hours long) and major private railways' 2-day strike. They employed this strategy until 1976, immediately before the GFPRWJ (General Federation of Private Railway Workers' Unions of Japan) adopted its principle of independent negotiation/settlement.

In response to the Transport Strike that occurred annually, the PCGELRC (Public Corporation and Government Enterprise Labour Relations Commission) and CLRC worked on adjusting wage disputes in public enterprises and private railways and proposed a mediation plan in order to prevent or halt strikes that would have significant impacts on the daily life of Japanese citizens. In this way, these two commissions played important roles in adjusting the wage hike level in Japan.

Due to changes in the industrial structure, industries influential in wage negotiations became new export industries, such as steel, shipbuilding, automobile and electric industries. Consequently, their trade union (IMF-JC) also became more influential, and started employing an independent negotiation approach to determine their wage level without the involvement of LRCs.

3 Recent trend of adjustment cases

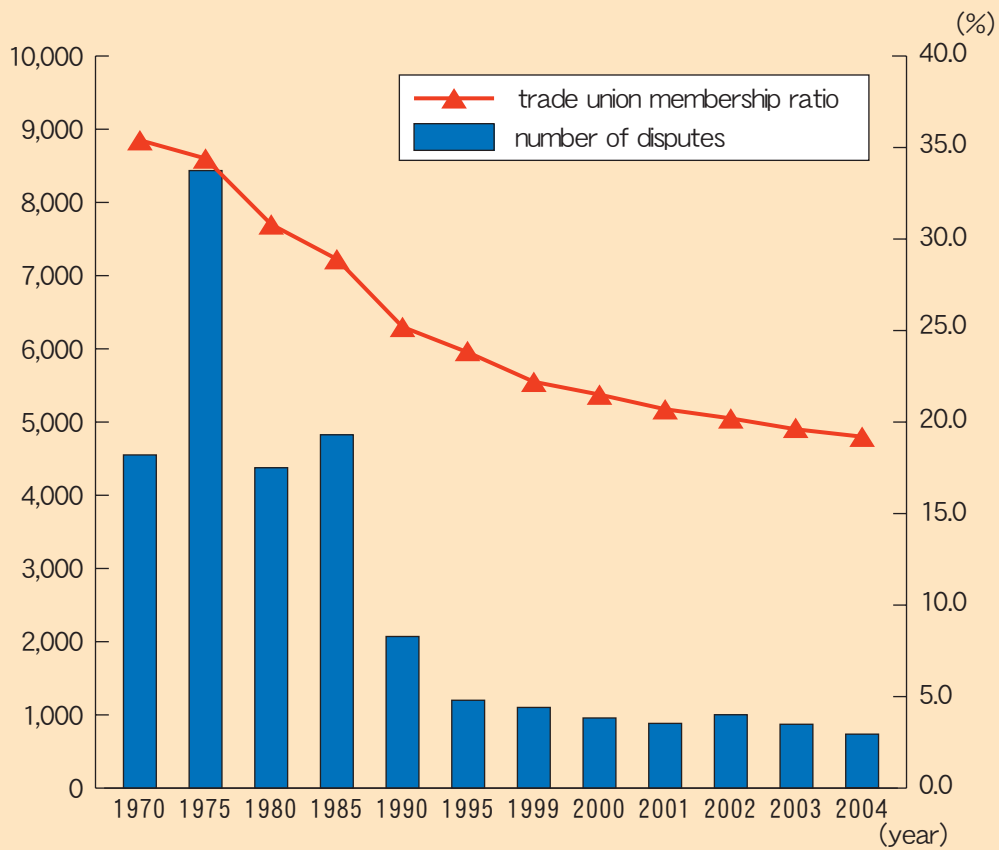
Since the independent negotiation approach took root, LRCs have mainly adjusted labour disputes other than wage or lump-sum payments (e.g. LRCs handle dismissal or personnel reduction cases and encourage collective bargaining) or labour disputes relating to small- and medium-sized enterprises. As part of administrative efforts, the PCLRC was reorganized as the GELRC (Government Enterprise Labour Relations Commission) in 1987 and then merged with the CLRC in 1988.

The number of new requests for adjustment filed for all LRCs decreased to 352 in 1991 after peaking at 2,249 in 1974 and the number of new complaints has stood at around 600 in recent years. As a recent trend, some unorganized workers suffer disadvantageous working conditions imposed by their employer, and then join trade union to ask LRCs to adjust their labour disputes.

As the Diet passed the "Law on Encouraging Resolution of Individual Labour Disputes" in 2001 in order to address individual labour disputes, prefectural LRCs are now able to provide advice or act as a conciliator to prevent or solve individual labour disputes.

After CLRC merged with GELRC, CLRC adjusts wage levels for state-run enterprises every year. In addition, because the government span off some state-run enterprises as independent administrative institutions in 2001, CLRC also adjusts wage levels for these independent administrative agencies. Employees of state-run enterprises (including those that turned into independent administrative institutions) successfully adjusted their wage level in FY2004 and FY2005 through the independent negotiation approach.

Trends in number of disputes and trade union membership ratio

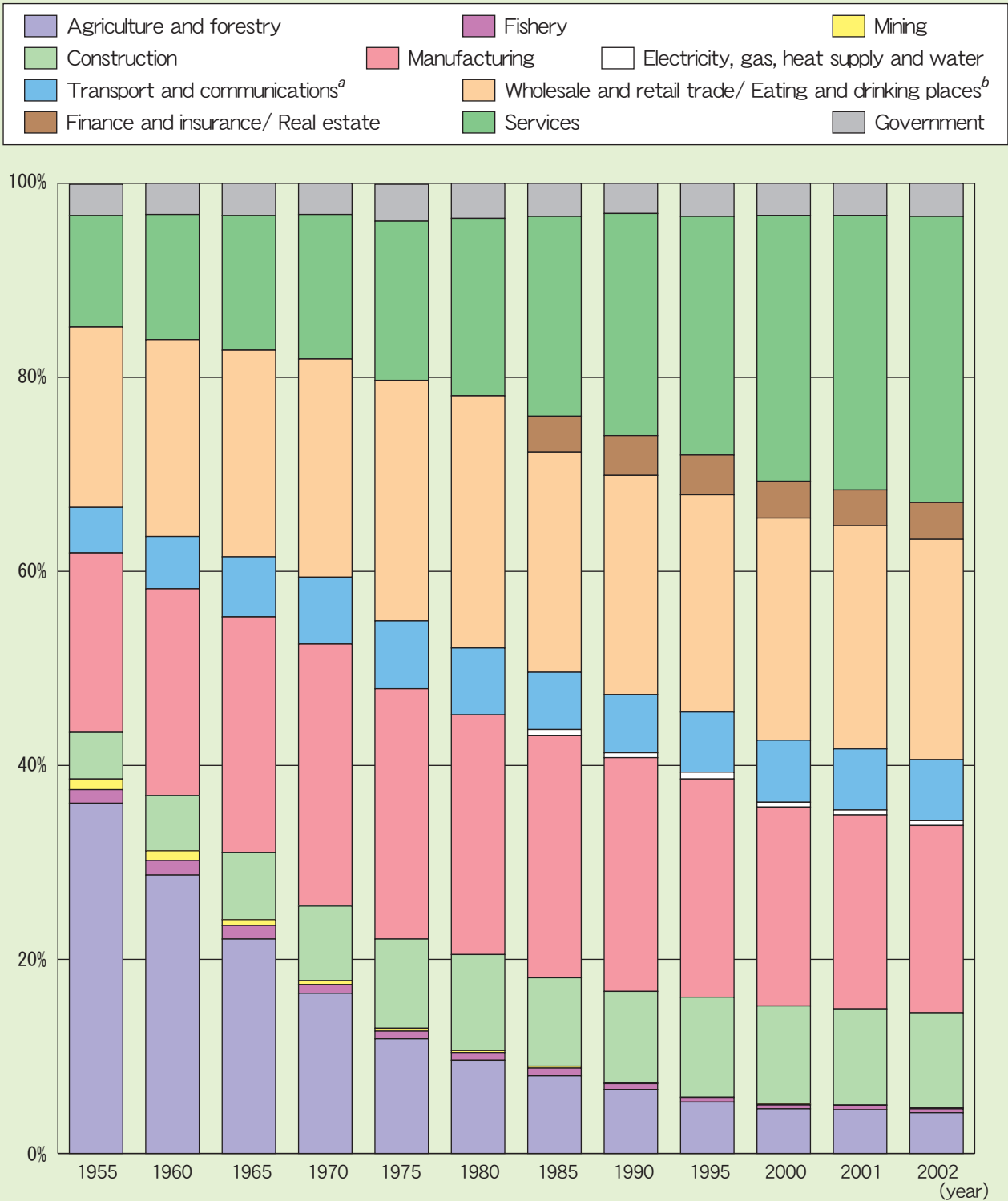


Source : Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare “Labour Strike Statistics Survey” and “Labour Union Basics Survey”

(Note) a) The number of disputes includes those carried from the previous year. The disputes that occurred in Okinawa before 1972 are not included.

b) The trade union membership ratio is defined as unionized employees as a percentage of all employees. (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau “Labour Force Survey”)

The change of a number of the employees ratio according to industry



Source : Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau” Labour Force Survey”

(Note) a) Data of Electricity, gas, heat supply and water are included in those of Transport and communications from 1955 to 1980.

b) Data of Finance and insurance/ Real estate are included in those of Wholesale and retail trade/ Eating and drinking places from 1955 to 1980.

II Trend of Unfair Labour Practice (ULP) Cases

1 Trade Union Law of 1949 and the Red Purge

The former Trade Union Law (enacted in 1945) prohibits employers from dismissing their employees or imposing other disadvantageous treatment, and punishes employers who have violated these prohibitions (i.e. the (direct) punishment approach).

However, in response to the criticism that the legislation prohibits only a limited scope of employer behavior and provides insufficient remedies, the Diet passed the present Trade Union Law in 1949, which incorporates some concepts of the Wagner Act in the United States, such as prohibiting unfair labour practices, and correcting these practices by issuing administrative orders (e.g. restoring to the original state).

After the present Trade Union Law became effective, the Red Purge under the GHQ occupation represents the first and most serious event for LRC's roles in unfair labour practice cases. The Red Purge means dismissing and excluding communists and their supporters from private corporations or official duties in line with GHQ's instructions. More than 110 workers filed complaints to LRCs, arguing that they suffered unfair labour practices.

In principle, prefectural LRCs were responsible for addressing these Red Purge-related cases, while CLRC was in charge of cases in the first instance for complaints that would pose significant impacts on a nationwide basis. After that, prefectural LRCs handled these cases, and many were resolved through amicable settlements.

Most complaints that resulted in LRC decisions were dismissed or rejected for the following two reasons: Employers did not fire the employee because of his/her involvement in the trade union; or the employees were regarded as spontaneously accepting the employer's personnel reduction.

2 Handling dismissal cases and the scope of back pay

After the 1950s, LRCs mainly handled typical unfair labour practices because many workers filed complaints, arguing that they had been fired by their employers due to their trade union activities. In such cases, LRCs ordered the employers to reinstate the workers to their original positions and pay the back pay. ("Back pay" means that the employer must pay wages that the employee would have obtained if the employer had not fired him/her.)

The problem was whether or not LRCs should deduct intermediate income from the back pay. ("Intermediate income" means income that the worker has earned since he/she was dismissed until returning to his/her original position.) Most LRCs did not deduct intermediate income, but the judicial branch judged the deduction to be necessary because back pay with intermediate income would be incompatible with the principle of restoring to its original state (*status quo ante*) and would impose a penalty on employers (Supreme Court judgment in 1962).

Nevertheless, LRCs kept supporting the concept of deduction-free back pay, and the

Supreme Court modified its precedent, saying that intermediate income should be deducted in principle, but this should be determined at the discretion of LRC, taking the following factors into consideration: difficulty in finding a new job; the natures/characteristics of his new duties; the amount of intermediate income; and the extent to which dismissal has restricted trade union activities (Supreme Court judgment in 1977). The judicial branch may examine LRC's decisions concerning whether the employer's behavior would fall under unfair labour practice or not, but LRCs have wide discretion in making a decision in fashioning the contents of remedies (Supreme Court judgment in 1977).

3 ULP cases increased during the era of high economic growth

From the 1960s to the 1970s (the high economic growth era), LRCs handled a significantly increased number of examinations on unfair labour practices.

ULP cases at that time had the following characteristics:

(1) Expansion of the "employer" concept

With more and more corporations being reorganized or turning into consolidated subsidiaries of other firms in the high economic growth era, many labour disputes emerged over whether or not a de facto employer would fall under the "employer" concept under Trade Union Law and would be prohibited from unfair labour practices. For example, these disputes relate to the following cases: if the parent firm effectively controls business operations and working conditions at its subsidiaries, or if the client (user) firm might treat outside workers (e.g. dispatch workers or contract-based workers) like its own staff.

In the first labour dispute that falls under this category, LRC judged that a client firm would not fall under the category of "employer" because the contract-based workers did not enter into an employment contract with the client firm (Order of Kanagawa Prefectural LRC in 1967), but the judicial branch judged that the client firm would fall under "employer" in the context of Trade Union Law as long as the firm effectively controlled a contract-based worker (Supreme Court judgment in 1976). Some courts also regarded a client firm as an "employer" of dispatch workers, who are employed by temporary agencies, if the client firm is in a position to determine the fundamental working conditions of such dispatched workers (Order of Osaka Prefectural LRC in 1978, and Supreme Court judgment in 1995).

(2) Increasing discrimination in promotion

As more and more corporations have adopted job-based or performance-based wage programs, performance evaluation by employers has become increasingly important. In this context, an increased number of workers filed complaints, arguing that they suffered discrimination in performance evaluation based on their trade union membership.

This type of labour disputes are likely to occur when a corporation has two or more trade unions with different goals for their activities. In particular, if a trade union conflicts with the other unions, employers tend to intervene, offering better

evaluation, wage hike or better lump-sum payment conditions for workers belonging to one of these unions.

These labour disputes usually have many issues and require many hearing sessions or witnesses because they tend to involve a lot of contesting parties, and repeatedly recur over a long period of time. This has led to delays in the ULP procedure.

To address this problem, LRCs have started to employ a fact-finding approach called a "mass observational method," utilizing inferences through collective comparison.

(3) Gradual increase in cases involving "joint trade unions"

While enterprise-based unionism is widely seen in large companies in Japan, in the mid 1950s, Japanese employees at small- and medium-sized enterprises started to jointly form region-based trade unions, regardless of their employers or industries. Such bodies are called "joint trade unions." As they have brought their labour disputes to LRCs, including those that are actually individual labour disputes, LRCs have been serving as dispute resolution agencies to address such cases.

A typical example is a so-called "asylum appeal" in which a worker participates in a joint trade union after getting fired, and the union files a complaint citing unfair labour practices if his/her former employer refuses to engage in collective labour bargaining regarding the worker in question. In this case, the employer must usually accept negotiations as long as the worker joins the joint union and the union proposes collective bargaining within a reasonable time of the worker getting fired.

As mentioned earlier, LRCs needed to handle diverse cases. From its inception through the 1970s, it took a long period of time for LRCs to complete its first instance and administrative review (second instance) processes. For this reason, experts started exploring a possible solution for expediting unfair labour practice cases, and also discussed whether or not Japan should adopt the omission of one instance among administrative process or judicial review.

4. CLRC-PCGELRC merger, and JR-related cases

As part of the administrative reform process, the government privatized three public enterprises (Japan National Railways, Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Public Corporation, and Japan Monopoly Corporation). Also linked to this, the government reorganized PCGELRC, the agency in charge of handling labour disputes in these three public enterprises, and then merged it with CLRC. During this process, when JNR was privatized and the successor firms recruited and relocated former JNR employees in 1987, many workers filed complaints one after another, arguing that successor firms had imposed discriminatory treatments on many trade union members opposing the privatization of JNR, or encouraged them to withdraw from the trade union. As a result, prefectural LRCs and CLRC received a total of 470 and 263 complaints, as of December 2005.

In these cases, neither the employer nor employees/unions have accepted a settlement

proposal by CLRC. In addition, many CLRC relief orders have been revoked by the judicial branch. It usually takes approximately 10 years to complete this type of lawsuit, suggesting that it would take 12 or 13 years to complete the overall dispute resolution processes. As a result, other ULP cases have also been delayed. LRCs, and CLRC in particular, have needed to handle vastly increased caseloads.

CLRC is working to resolve pending JR-related cases through settlement. However, as CLRC accepts new complaints every year, the commission still had 78 pending JR-related cases as of December 2005.

5. Speeding up the ULP procedure and amending Trade Union Law

LRCs face major challenges: Handling long-term pending cases, and conducting the ULP procedure in a more adequate manner. More and more complaints remain unsolved for a long time, particularly JR-related cases and other labour disputes arising from certain specific labour-management relations. Experts are concerned that it takes a longer time to complete the ULP procedure on unfair labour practices.

For this reason, LRCs and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare started exploring a possible solution for accelerating ULP procedure, improving the fact-finding process, and delivering more adequate decisions. They made practicable efforts, and lawmakers significantly amended the Trade Union Law in 2004 (the amended law became effective on January 1, 2005), intending to significantly improve ULP procedures on unfair labour practices.

Since this amendment to the Trade Union Law, CLRC now handles complaints more quickly, and successfully completed a total of 122 cases in 2005.

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III Statistics (Number of cases)

1. Number of adjustment cases

Year	CLRC and prefectural LRCs				CLRC			
	Total	Conciliation	Mediation	Arbitration	Total	Conciliation	Mediation	Arbitration
1946 (March-December)	188	144	44	—	5	1	4	—
1947	894	591	301	2	37	17	20	—
1948	1,414	1,066	342	6	20	10	10	—
1949	1,300	1,111	185	4	26	14	12	—
1950	1,114	887	227	—	39	22	17	—
1955	1,124	1,036	87	2	81	56	25	—
1960	1,201	1,157	37	7	146	137	9	—
1965	1,698	1,580	113	5	153	126	27	—
1970	1,554	1,466	87	1	111	99	12	—
1975	1,877	1,793	66	18	112	111	1	—
1980	999	975	23	1	22	20	1	1
1985	689	669	17	3	13	13	—	—
1990	374	348	16	10	23	4	10	9
1995	505	466	29	10	29	11	9	9
1996	516	477	30	9	28	9	10	9
1997	518	488	21	9	27	9	9	9
1998	617	571	28	18	34	16	9	9
1999	661	625	24	12	38	19	10	9
2000	613	567	33	13	37	17	11	9
2001	601	573	19	9	22	2	11	9
2002	634	590	34	10	45	3	32	10
2003	605	573	21	11	33	6	18	9
2004	531	526	4	1	10	10	—	—
2005	564	560	4	—	10	10	—	—

Source: "Annual Report on Labour Relations Commissions"

* As CLRC merged with GELRC (Government Enterprise Labor Relations Commission) in 1988, CLRC took over GELRC's tasks of adjusting wage levels for workers of government-run enterprises. The figures in the "Arbitration" column reflect such phenomenon.

2. Number of unfair labour practice cases (first instance)

Category Year	Complaints			Cases closed							
	Carried over from preceding year	New complaints	Total	Withdrawn/ settled	Orders/decisions					Subtotal	Total
					Totally remedied	Partially remedied	Dismissed	Rejected			
1949 (June-December)		320	320	113	6	3	16	16	41	154	
1950	166	526	692	374	18	16	48	43	125	499	
1951	193	287	480	284	11	16	44	62	133	417	
1952	63	320	383	279	16	18	15	7	56	335	
1953	48	394	442	252	18	15	20	3	56	308	
1954	134	445	579	373	21	18	27	4	70	443	
1955	136	397	533	390	9	14	35	4	62	452	
1960	132	392	524	325	8	35	7	—	50	375	
1965	270	572	842	366	33	49	24	4	110	476	
1970	938	1,483	2,421	680	30	63	17	2	112	792	
1975	1,173	929	2,102	521	51	105	8	—	164	685	
1980	1,357	778	2,135	391	44	60	20	1	125	516	
1985	2,356	560	2,916	1,065	54	49	7	4	114	1,179	
1990	1,565	274	1,839	290	39	59	13	2	113	403	
1995	1,034	313	1,347	196	33	34	28	1	96	292	
1996	1,055	327	1,382	215	21	50	19	1	91	306	
1997	1,076	332	1,408	300	23	40	20	4	87	387	
1998	1,021	354	1,375	265	21	42	21	4	88	353	
1999	1,022	405	1,427	265	28	35	19	11	93	358	
2000	1,069	384	1,453	294	28	43	20	7	98	392	
2001	1,061	341	1,402	292	39	42	22	126	229	521	
2002	881	394	1,275	302	20	44	32	21	117	419	
2003	856	363	1,219	280	27	43	38	8	116	396	
2004	823	311	1,134	240	26	56	49	4	135	375	
2005	759	294	1,053	273	44	59	25	7	135	408	

Source: "Annual Report on Labour Relations Commissions"

(Note) The figures in the "Withdrawn/settled" column include cases transferred to other organs.

3. Number of unfair labour practice cases (administrative appeal)

Category Year	Complaints					Cases concluded							
	Carried over from preceding year	New complaints			Total number of cases	Withdrawn/ settled	Orders/decisions					Total	
		from employees	from employers	Subtotal			First-instance order sustained	First-instance order partially revoked/modified	First-instance order revoked/modified	Rejected	Subtotal		
1949 (June-December)		6	4	10	10	2							2
1950	8	44	21	65	73	41	12	1	2	-	15	56	
1951	17	42	7	49	66	25	28	3	1	-	32	57	
1952	9	7	11	18	27	9	10	4	-	-	14	23	
1953	4	12	13	25	29	8	9	4	-	-	13	21	
1954	8	21	23	44	52	15	10	-	3	-	13	28	
1955	24	20	10	30	54	19	12	1	-	-	13	32	
1960	23	7	11	18	41	10	6	5	3	-	14	24	
1965	62	24	48	72	134	56	12	1	-	-	13	69	
1970	101	24	58	82	183	37	14	4	-	-	18	55	
1975	92	25	68	93	185	34	11	5	6	-	22	56	
1980	198	27	57	84	282	46	10	8	-	-	18	64	
1985	218	14	47	61	279	56	8	5	2	-	15	71	
1990	238	13	69	82	320	45	3	2	2	-	7	52	
1995	259	17	36	53	312	25	4	14	1	3	22	47	
1996	265	18	32	50	315	14	12	12	1	2	27	41	
1997	274	19	33	52	326	22	8	12	1	2	23	45	
1998	281	25	26	51	332	25	10	19	-	1	30	55	
1999	277	22	29	51	328	26	8	18	3	2	31	57	
2000	271	29	35	64	335	41	7	4	1	3	15	56	
2001	279	30	34	64	343	38	11	14	-	1	26	64	
2002	279	35	31	66	345	52	15	14	-	2	31	83	
2003	262	32	33	65	327	22	20	11	3	1	35	57	
2004	270	39	44	83	353	47	11	13	-	1	25	72	
2005	281	34	56	90	371	57	36	23	4	2	65	122	

Source: "Annual Report on Labour Relations Commissions"

IV

Chronological Table on Labour Relations Commissions

Year	Historical backdrops, government actions, etc.	Facts related to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (former Ministry of Health and Welfare, and former Ministry of Labour) and Labour Relations Commissions
1945	Aug. 15: The imperial rescript of surrender promulgated Oct.: GHQ directed the Japanese government to implement five major reforms, intending to democratize Japan.	Oct. 27: The Ministry of Health and Welfare setting up Labour Policy Bureau Dec. 22: Trade Union Law promulgated (enforced on March 1, 1946)
1946	Nov. 3: The Constitution of Japan promulgated (enforced on May 3, 1947)	Mar. 1: Central Labour Relations Commission (CLRC) and prefectural labour relations commissions established Sept. 1: The first annual meeting of the National Labour Relations Commissions Liaison Council held Sept. 27: Labour Relations Adjustment Law promulgated (enforced on October 13)
1947	Jan. 18: "2-1 General Strike" announced by All Public Sector Joint Struggle Committee Jan. 31: GHQ notified Douglas MacArthur's statement to call off "2-1 General Strike." All Public Sector Joint Struggle Committee decided to call off "2-1 General Strike." Oct. 23: National Public Service Law promulgated (becoming partially enforced on Nov. 1 and fully enforced on July 1, 1948)	Sept. 1: Ministry of Labour established (spun off from the Ministry of Health and Welfare)
1948	Mar. 18: Rolling blackouts strike by All Japan Electric Workers Union (AJEWU) Apr. 12: Japan Federation of Employers' Associations (Nikkeiren) established Dec. 3: The amended National Public Service Law promulgated and enforced (prohibiting strike of national civil servants)	July 22: MacArthur's Letter (prohibiting public servants' strikes, amending National Public Service Law, and setting up state-run enterprises on national railways and state monopoly) July 31: Government Ordinance #201 promulgated and enforced (prohibiting labour dispute actions by public servants) Dec. 20: Public Corporation Labour Relations Law promulgated (enforced on June 1, 1949)
1949	June 1: Japan National Railways and Japan Monopoly Corporation established	June 1: Full amendment to Trade Union Law (remedy for unfair labour practices through administrative order; enforced on June 10) June 1: Five labour relations commissions, including Public Corporation Arbitration Committee, established to address labour disputes at Japan National Railways and Japan Monopoly Corporation, in accordance with the amended Public Corporation Labour Relations Law Aug. 4: Labour Relations Commission Regulations by Central Labour Relations Commission (CLRC) enforced
1950	June 25: Korean War breaks out July 11: General Council of Trade Unions of Japan (GCTUJ) established July: The Red Purge commences	* LRCs received many complaints on unfair labour practices related to the Red Purge.
1951	Sept. 8: Treaty of Peace with Japan signed	

Year	Historical backdrops, government actions, etc.	Facts related to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (former Ministry of Health and Welfare, and former Ministry of Labour) and Labour Relations Commissions
1952	<p>July 19: Some trade unions withdrew from GCTUJ to form the Congress of Industrial Unions of Japan (CIU, or Shinsanbetsu)</p> <p>Sept. 24 - December 18: Long strike by AJEWU</p> <p>Oct. 13 - December 26: Long strike by Japan Coal Miners' Union (JCMU)</p> <p>Nov.: JCMU strike leading to serious shortage of coal, posing significant negative impacts on the daily life of Japanese citizens because of Japan National Railways' limited transport operations and power cuts.</p>	<p>July 31: Law for Amending Labour Relations Adjustment Law and Public Corporation Labour Relations Law promulgated (creating the emergency adjustment scheme, and applying Public Corporation Labour Relations Law to five industrial civil services, such as Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Public Corporation, and national forest services; enforced on Aug. 1).</p> <p>Dec. 16: Emergency adjustment scheme applied to the JCMU strike. The strike was over as CLRC acted as a conciliator (Dec. 27).</p>
1953	July 27: Truce of Korean War	Aug. 7: Law on Regulating Strikes in Electric Utility and Coal Mining Industries promulgated and enforced
1954	<p>Apr. 22: Congress of Labour Unions of Japan (CLUJ, the predecessor of the Japanese Confederation of Labour (JCL)) established</p> <p>May 25 - September 26: Omi Kinuito Dispute</p>	July 17 - Sept. 16: CLRC ex officio acted as a conciliator to intervene in the Omi Kenshi Strike. The strike was over because CLRC found the employer's behaviors to be unfair labour practice at its first hearing.
1955	<p>Jan. 28: GCTUJ held the Spring Wage Hike Joint Struggle Conference (leading to the annual spring labour offensive on later days)</p> <p>Nov. 15: Liberal Democratic Party established</p>	
1956	<p>Apr. 11: Liaison Council of Independent Unions established (renamed as the "Federation of Independent Unions" (FIU) in September 1956)</p> <p>* Since then, Japan had four major trade unions (GCTUJ, JCL, CIU, and FIU) until JTUC-RENGO was established.</p>	Aug. 1: Due to amendment to the Public Corporation Labour Relations Law, the Public Corporation Mediation Committee (PCMC) and the Public Corporation Arbitration Committee (PCAC) merged with each other to form the Public Corporation and Government Enterprise Labour Relations Commission (PCGELRC).
1959	Aug. 28: Mitsui Mining proposed the 2nd personnel cutback plan to its trade union, leading to the Mitsui Miike Coal Miners' Strike.	
1960	<p>July 19: The 1st Ikeda Cabinet started. At the cabinet meeting, ministers agreed to cool down the Mitsui Miike Coal Miners' Strike.</p> <p>Nov. 1: Economic Council submitted its report on the income-doubling plan.</p> <p>Nov. 1: Mitsui Miike agreed to a life lockout, while the trade union agreed to call off the strike. (Mitsui Miike Coal Miners' Strike terminated)</p>	Nov. 25: Mitsui Miike Coal Miners' Strike over as CLRC proposed its 5th conciliation plan.
1962		Sept. 18: In relation to the LRC order concerning unfair labour practices, the Supreme Court judged that intermediate income should be deducted from back pay.
1964	<p>Apr. 4: Liaison Council of Public Corporation Trade Unions decided to come out on a half-day strike on April 17, requesting a wage hike in line with the private sector's wage hike level.</p> <p>Apr. 16: Prime Minister Ikeda and Chairman Ohta (General Council of Trade Unions of Japan) engaged in summit talks (the Ikeda-Ohta Summit) and confirmed the principle to raise the wage level in accordance with the private sector's wage hike. The April 17 strike was avoided.</p>	
1965		June 14: Japan ratified the ILO Treaty #87.
1966		Dec. 23: Labour Relations Law Study Group submitted its report (Ishii Report) to the Labour Minister.

Year	Historical backdrops, government actions, etc.	Facts related to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (former Ministry of Health and Welfare, and former Ministry of Labour) and Labour Relations Commissions
1968	* Japan's GNP ranked 2nd in the world.	
1970	Jan. 20: Japan Federation of Employers' Associations proposed the productivity standard principle.	
1971	Aug. 15: The United States stopped converting between US dollars and gold (the Nixon Shock).	
1973	Feb. 14: The Japanese yen joined the floating exchange rate regime.	
1974	* The Oil Shock led to Japan's negative economic growth for the first time in the post-war era as well as rampant price confusion	
1975	Nov. 26 - Dec. 3: "Strike seeking the right to strike" (Demanding the right to strike, Japan National Railways workers stopped almost all railway transport.)	
1976		May 6: The Supreme Court judged that a company accepting dispatch workers would fall under "employer" as stated in Trade Union Law
1977	Apr. 6: Private railways independently settled their wage hike negotiations. (After that, they stopped requesting CLRC intervention.)	Feb. 23: The Supreme Court acknowledged the LRC's discretion to determine how to correct unfair labour practice, and modified the judicial precedent in terms of deducting intermediate income from back pay.
1979	* The 2nd Oil Shock	* The National Labour Relations Commissions Liaison Council (NLRCLC) set up the ad hoc committee to discuss the "Basic Framework for Examination Process." (The committee submitted its report to the NLRCLC annual meeting in 1980.)
1982	July 30: Ad Hoc Commission on Administrative Reform submitted its report on administrative reform to split up and privatize the three public corporations, such as JNR. Sept. 24: The cabinet decided to freeze the recommendation of the National Personnel Authority.	May 22: Labour Relations Law Study Group released its report (Ishikawa Report). Oct. 1: Amended Public Corporation Labour Relations Law promulgated, in line with the privatization of the alcohol state-monopoly.
1983	* Trade union membership ratio fell down below 30%.	
1985	Apr. 1: Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Public Corporation, and Japan Monopoly Corporation privatized Sept. 22: The Plaza Accord Oct. 11: "Basic Policy on Splitting up and Privatizing Japan National Railways" approved at the cabinet meeting	June 1: Equal Employment Opportunity Law promulgated (enforced on April 1, 1986) July 5: Worker Dispatch Law promulgated (enforced on July 1, 1986)
1986	Apr. 7: "Maekawa Report" (expanding domestic demand) Nov. 28: The Diet passed the eight legislations on JNR reforms.	
1987	Apr. 1: JNR split up and privatized. New JR firms established. Nov. 20: Private sector's "RENGO" established. JCL and FIU dissolved. * "Bubble Boom" (until the early 1990s)	Mar. 13: Former JNR workers filed a complaint to Tokyo LRC, seeking remedies for JR's refusal to hire former JNR employees. (Subsequently, many former JNR workers filed JR-related complaints to prefectural LRCs one after another) Apr. 1: The Public Corporation and Government Enterprise Labour Relations Commission renamed itself the "Government Enterprise Labour Relations Commission (GELRC)." * Many former JNR workers filed applications to prefectural LRCs, requesting LRCs to adjust JR-related labour disputes.

Year	Historical backdrops, government actions, etc.	Facts related to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (former Ministry of Health and Welfare, and former Ministry of Labour) and Labour Relations Commissions
1988		Mar. 11: JR filed an application for administrative appeal regarding the relief order (Tokyo LRC order on March 3, 1988). (Subsequently, JR filed similar applications one after another regarding relief orders delivered by prefectural LRCs.) Oct. 1: CLRC merged with GELRC.
1989	Nov. 21: New "JTUC-RENGO" established. National Confederation of Trade Unions established. GCTUJ dissolved.	
1992		May 28: CLRC offered employers and employees its proposal to settle JR-related labour disputes. (Employers and employees both refused this proposal.)
1993	Nov. 12: "Hiraiwa Report" (deregulation)	Dec. 24: CLRC delivered its reexamination orders on JR-related labour disputes. (E.g., CLRC ordered JR West to hire former JNR workers. Since then, CLRC has delivered 19 orders on JR-related labour disputes until 1996.)
1995		Nov. 14: 50th Anniversary Ceremony of the Labour Relations Commission Scheme
1996		Mar. 1: 50th Anniversary of the Labour Relations Commission Scheme (commemorative stamps issued, etc.)
1998	Oct. 22: JNR Settlement Corporation abolished. Japan Railway Construction Public Corporation took over the duties of JNR Settlement Corporation.	May 28: Tokyo District Court delivered a judgment on JR Hokkaido's refusal to hire former JNR workers (revoking CLRC's order).
1999	July 27: The cabinet set up the Judicial Reform Council (until July 26, 2001).	July 9: National Labour Relations Commissions Liaison Council (NLRCLC) set up "Taskforce on LRC Framework for Future." (Since then, NLRCLC experts examined possible approaches to accelerate the ULP procedure in unfair labour practice cases.) Nov. 8: Tokyo High Court delivered its judgment on JR Honshu's refusal to hire former JNR workers (revoking CLRC's order). (Since then, High Courts rejected appeals filed by CLRC)
2000	May 30: Liberal Democratic Party, etc. proposed a "Four-Party Agreement" on JR's refusal to hire former JNR employees.	
2001	Jan. 6: The central government reorganized ministries and established new ministries such as the Cabinet Office. Jan. 27: At its national convention, the National Railway Workers' Union decided to accept the "Four-Party Agreement." June 12: Judicial Reform Council submitted the "Judicial Reform Council's Opinion Paper" to the cabinet. Dec. 1: The cabinet set up Judicial Reform Headquarters, Labour Affairs Taskforce and some other taskforces established.	Jan. 6: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare established (by reorganizing the Ministry of Health and Welfare and Ministry of Labour) July 11: Law on Encouraging Resolution of Individual Labour Disputes promulgated (enforced on October 1) Oct. 19: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) set up a taskforce to review the ULP procedure on unfair labour practice cases.
2002	May 28: Nippon Keidanren established (merger of Keidanren (Japan Federation of Economic Organizations) and Nikkeiren (Japan Federation of Employers' Associations)).	

Year	Historical backdrops, government actions, etc.	Facts related to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (former Ministry of Health and Welfare, and former Ministry of Labour) and Labour Relations Commissions
2003	Apr. 1: Japan Post established Aug. 8: Judicial Reform Headquarters submitted "Interim Report on Comprehensively Enhancing Capabilities to Handle Labour Relation-related Dispute." * Trade union membership ratio fell down below 20%	July 25: MHLW's taskforce prepared its opinion paper on the examination process on unfair labour practices (this opinion paper was released on July 31). Dec. 22: The Supreme Court delivered its judgment on JR's refusal to hire former JNR employees (rejecting the final appeal filed by CLRC).
2004	May 12: Industrial Tribunal Law promulgated (enforced on April 1, 2006)	Nov. 17: Trade Union Law amended (enforced on January 1, 2005) to accelerate the examination process and deliver better orders Dec. 22: Labour Relations Commission Regulations amended (enforced on January 1, 2005)

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