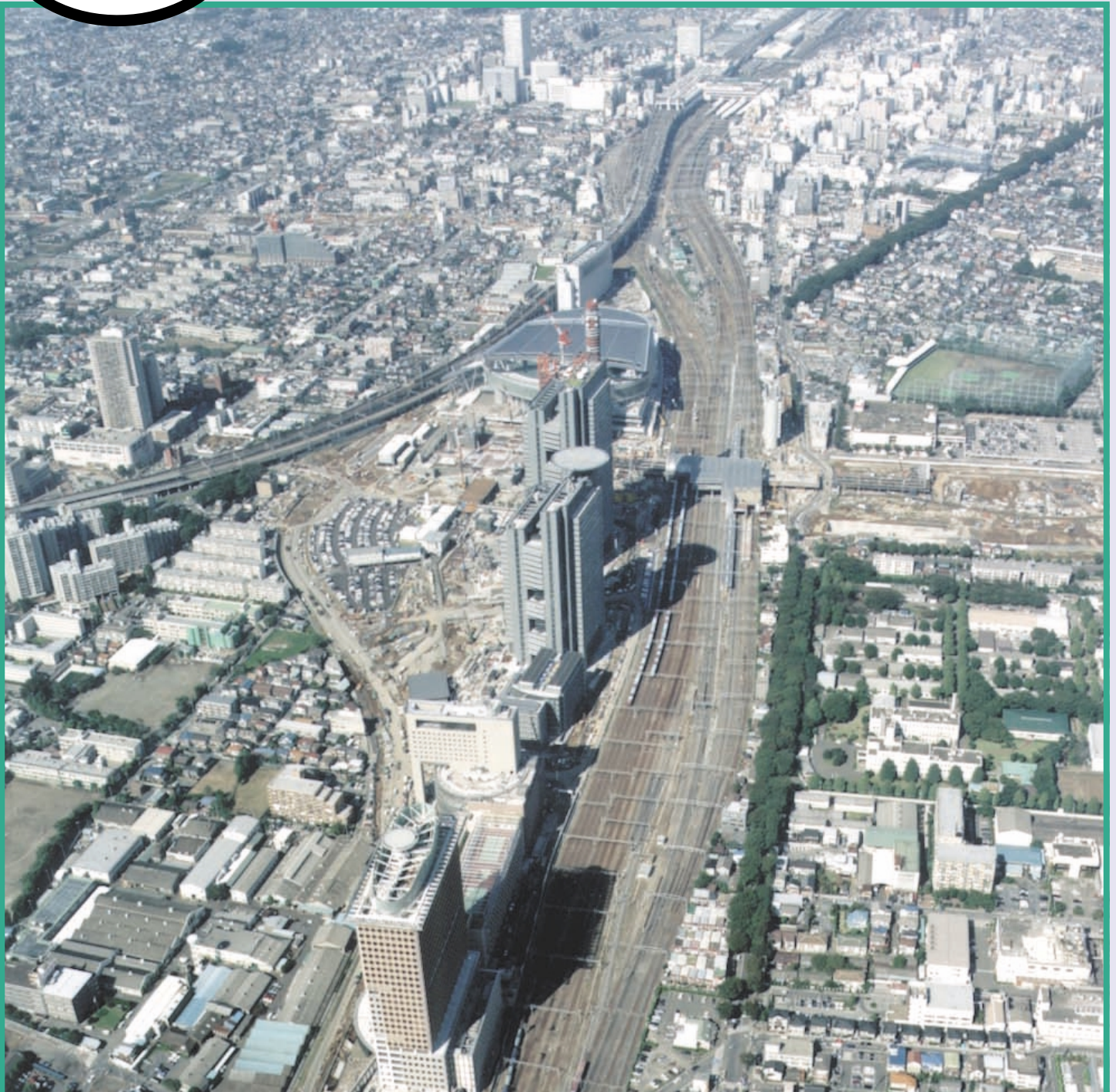


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FEATURE: Railway Lessons and Challenges

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Site of former Omiya marshalling yard
redeveloped as a huge business,
commercial and cultural complex with
a new JR East station
(JR East)

Editorial

Continuing challenges

The railway will soon be 200 years old. In 1804, Richard Trevithick succeeded in running his steam locomotive on a small tramway in south Wales, although the advent of real commercial railways was not before 1825 when George Stephenson opened the Stockton and Darlington Railways in north England and in 1830 when he opened the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. Anyhow, we can soon celebrate the survival of railways for two centuries, despite some serious difficulties since the middle of this century.

During the past 100 years, the railway has made some remarkable progress both in technology and management methods. But the 20th century also saw high growth of motor vehicles and airplanes, presenting great challenges to the railway. The severe competition with road and air transport will surely continue into the 21st century.

Can railways survive another 100 years? The answer depends very much on their future efforts. It seems that railway managers in most countries are now more interested in management reform than in technical development. However, we must remember that technical breakthroughs always played a major role in the development of railways. Without new technologies, especially those for saving energy and labour, and for protecting the environment, the railway's future can never be assured.

T. SUGA

Contents

Feature

Railway Lessons and Challenges

Evolution and Revolution—The Changing Focus of Regulation of the World's Railways

David A. Hensher and William G. Waters II 4

Making Railways the Cornerstone of 21st Century Travel Satoru Sone 12

Transportation—Prospect and Retrospect L. David Shen 18

Sensible Politics and Transport Theories?—Japan's National Railways in the 20th Century

Ryohei Kakumoto 23

Other Articles

Railway Posters—Illuminating the Role of the Railways in Promoting Social

and Economic Development in Japan Ian Smith 34

The Cagayan Valley Railway Extension Project Gary L. Satre 38

Another Perspective

Singing in the Rain Benjamin Fouassier 46

Railway Technology Today 9

Protecting the Trackside Environment Tatsuo Maeda 48

Topics 58

Photostory: Japanese Rail Travellers through the 20th Century 2, 61-63