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British Aerospace 748 ATP go-ahead looks likely

BRITISH AEROSPACE'S Manchester
division is "very confident" that the
company's Board will agree to launch
an HS.748 advanced turboprop (ATP)
programme early next year, despite strong competition for funding from BAe's stake of the Airbus A320 de-velopment programme.
According to a Manchester division spokesman, the BAe Board will be attracted by the 748 ATP programme because "it will be a very cost-effec-tive exercise". Manchester's favoured 748 development is a 16 -5ft stretch of the current aircraft, to seat about 64 passengers at 31in seat pitch.
The division says that it expects de-mand for this aircraft to be "much greater than we've ever achieved for the 748" because its economics are "quite compelling" to the prospective buyer. The division has already approached "quite a number of opera-tors" with 748 ATP cost and design proposals, and they have been "very impressed". BAe Manchester believes that the 748 ATP will be most attrac-tive to carriers operating in the in-tensive markets of the USA and Europe. It foresees "a market for this class, with the 748 ATP's economics, in excess of the total market for 50-seat aircraft".

Manchester says that it is able to make this claim because the ATP's development costs "will be an order of magnitude less than building a new aircraft. So we will be able to main-

tain the price we quote the customer in the near future—we can quote a real price rather than a current price". Although not willing yet to say what this price would be, Man-chester does predict that cost per seat of the ATP will be "approxi-mately the same as the current 748". BAe has not yet chosen a lead powerplant for the 748 ATP, but Pratt & Whitney Canada's proposed PW100/9 is rated the "hot favourite" by company staff. It is almost certain that Rolls-Royce will lose the ATP engine battle, despite being sole en-gine supplier for all 748s built to date. Manchester maintains that the PWlOO/9-powered 748 ATP will be "the most fuel-efficient aircraft of its size in the sky".

If built, the aircraft will have six
or eight-bladed advanced-technology propellers. Dowty and a joint BAe Dynamics/Hamilton Standard group are both bidding for the contract.
A major attraction of the 748 ATP project to the BAe Board will be that Manchester division believes it can contribute "a substantial amount of money into the development kitty" from its own funds, beoause the divi-sion as such is "a very profitable entity" with revenue currently arising from the 748, Nimrod, and other pro-grammes. So BAe Public Company Ltd may be able to support both 748 ATP development and a good slice of the A320 programme.

Delta want s carbon brakes
BOEING has asked carbon-brake
manufacturers to bid for the replace-
ment of 757 steel brakes with carbon
units, following a Delta initiative
which other 757 customers are ex-
pected to follow.
Boeing's interest in carbon brakes, which would save about 6001b weight per shipset, has become particularly keen (according to British Airways engineering sources) since the re-

markable performance of Concorde's Dunlop brakes in a high-speed, high-weight rejected take-off at New York last August. The US manufacturer is considering carbon brakes as standard fit on its new types, and possibly as a retrofit on 737s and 747s in due course.

British Airways' current thoughts are to specify carbon for its last few 757s, retrofitting the rest later.

BCal shows

traffic boost
BCAL scheduled-service traffic in the 12 months ending October 31 was a recession-busting 750 million load tonne-km—an increase of 39 per cent over the previous year. Total traffic including charters went up 28 per cent to 821 million ltk. Overall load factor increased more than one point to nearly 59 per cent, with 70 per cent recorded in the airline's first full year on the London-Hong Kong route, on which 74,000 DC-10 pas-sengers (116,000 to date) were carried in five flights a week.

But the year has been one of high introductory costs for the Scottish carrier, with a 1981 loss of between £1 million and £2 million expected despite the remarkable traffic results. As well as to Hong Kong, BCal has opened services from Gatwick to Houston, St Louis, Dallas/Fort Worth, and Atlanta. A profit for 1982 is forecast, with consolidation and higher industry fare-levels on the over-capacity North Atlantic routes. The airline's eight DC-10-30s have each been averaging over 13hr a day.
• BCal joint deputy chairman Sir Peter Masefield has told a meeting of top Hong Kong business people that the world airline scheduled-services' loss of $2,100 million would have been a profit with only another $10 per fare. But, he says, competi-tion is good for the passenger—traffic on London-Hong Kong was 191,000 passengers and 8,500 tons of cargo in 1979 when British Airways had a monopoly; traffic with BCal and Cathay also on the route was up to those figures in the first half of this year.

Short finals ...

The Japanese Government is to sell 5 per cent of its holdings in Japan Air Lines to help reduce Japan's national debt. It expects to raise about $27 mil-lion by selling 2-5 million shares, re-ducing the Government holding in JAL to about 35 per cent. The airline reports a 3,600 million Yen (£8-3 mil-lion) net profit for the first half of its 1981 financial year (April 1-Septem-ber 30). During the same period last year JAL suffered a £6 million loss.

Nigeria Airways has transferred its weekly scheduled Lagos Boeing 707 freighter service from Heathrow to Gatwick Airport, in order to provide a broader service to forwarders based in south-east England.

Time Air, a Canadian commuter air-line based in Lethbridge, Alberta, has received permission to complete an
£800,000 takeover of Gateway Avia-
tion, Edmonton. Time Air must now
provide Canada's Federal Air Trans-
port Committee with a report on its
financial plans.

4 FLIGHT International, 2 January 1982