AIR TRANSPORT

Boeing and
MDC size

up propfan
market
SEATTLE

Boeing is considering vari-
ations of its proposed
propfan-powered 7J7 due to
be in service in 1992. It may
offer a small 100-110-seat
model as well as or instead of
a larger 150-seat model.
McDonnell Douglas too is
looking at both 110- and 130-
seat variations of its MD-91X.
The 100-seat market is
becoming crowded. BAe and
Fokker are already there with
the four-engined BAe 146 and
twinjet Fokker 100.
Boeing says it has never
specified a size for the 7J7 and
plans are still flexible. It will
be offering guarantees for the
aircraft in the second quarter
of next year for delivery in
1992.

McDonnell Douglas (MDC)
MD-91X will be available a
year earlier and, like Boeing,
MDC has not determined the
size. Its first propfan will be
either a 100-110-seat DC-9-30
replacement or a slightly
larger 130-seat update of the
newly-flown MD-87. The next
project, the 155-seat MD-92X,
will be in service in 1992,
MDC hopes. It aims to extend
the life of the MD-80 with the
two propfan versions and thus
offer a low cost propfan
which is technologically less
advanced than either the 7J7
or A320 before producing the
all-new MD-94.

MDC is concentrating tech-
nological developments on the
MD-90 series tail which will
be common to at least the first
two models. Otherwise tech-
nology is based on the MD-88.
Its advantage over the A320
will be in the powerplant—
MDC is confident it can
achieve a 35 per cent to 40 per
cent fuel saving with a prop-
fan over equivalent turbofans.
By using an existing airframe
and technology the MD-91X
and -2X should have a cost
advantage over the 7J7. But
Boeing is adamant that it will
not pass on the 7J7's devel-
opment cost to airlines but
will absorb it itself through
improved production effi-
ciency.
MDC is the only manu-

facturer to test two different
propfans on the same aircraft
and under the same condi-
tions. An MD-80 will fly with
a General Electric UDF in
June next year and testing
will start with an Allison/
Pratt & Whitney engine next
December.

The manufacturers' predic-
tions of the size of the market
for small, short/medium-
range aircraft vary. Boeing, in
its market outlook published
earlier this year, predicts a
requirement for 575 aircraft of
125 seats or less by the year
2000 and for 2,553 short/
medium-range aircraft in the
125-185 seat category.
MDC expects the world's
airlines to buy 1,166 short-
range 110-seat aircraft and
1,786 160-seaters. Airbus,
which includes secondhand
aircraft in its calculations,
predicts that some 4,489
aircraft of 100-175 seats will
be delivered between now and
2005.
All three manufacturers
expect demand for aircraft of
this size to peak in the early
1990s with, deliveries trailing
off rapidly towards the end of
the century. Airbus expects
the peak in 1990, MDC
between 1990 and 1995, and
Boeing puts the peak for
under 125-seat demand in
1994 and 1995, and says the
numbers of 125-185-seat air-
craft delivered will be greatest
in 1988 and 1993. This sug-
gests that time-wise Airbus
with its A320 in service in
1988 may be best placed to
establish itself in this particu-
lar sector.

Saab wins

new SF.340

orders
WINDSOR

Saab has three new customers
for its 34-seat SF.340 turbo-
prop with orders it describes
as "very significant". The
aircraft has won a first toe-
hold in Latin America with an
order from Argentine regional
Lapa (Lineas Aereas Privadas
Argentinas). French regionals
Brit Air and Europe Aero
Service (EAS) have ordered'
one each. One of the largest
existing customers, Crossair,
has ordered another three
aircraft, taking its fleet to 13.
Lapa's order is for two to
replace the Shorts 330s in its
fleet. It will receive the first
new aircraft this month and
the second in late January.
Lapa also has a Bandeirante
on lease and Saab is particu-
larly pleased to have won the
order in view of the increasing
links between Argentina and
Brazil in the aircraft manu-
facturing field.
The Brit Air order is signifi-
cant because it comes from an
ATR42 operator and proves,
Saab says, that the two
aircraft are complementary
rather than competing. "It
confirms what we have always
thought—that there is quite a
difference between the 30-40
seaters and 45-50 seaters,"
a spokesman says. Morlaix-
based Brit Air also operates

Saab recently delivered an SF.340 to Isle of Man-based Manx Airlines

IVHHW

Bandeirantes and was tipped
as a potential Brasilia launch
customer.
French domestic carrier
EAS wants an SF.340 to set

up a commuter division based
at Charles de Gaulle. Its
aircraft will be delivered in
late spring next year.
With two new European
customers Saab claims that,
excluding Shorts which it says
is not a direct competitor, it
has 70 per cent of the Euro-
pean market for 30-40 seaters,
leaving 30 per cent for
Embraer and de Havilland
Canada.

New airline

aims for

Mediterranean
GATWICK

A new charter airline,
Mediterranean Express, plans
to start operation with two
BAe One-Elevens next
summer.

It will fly from Gatwick and
Luton to holiday destinations
mainly in Italy. Vice-
chairman Rocco Laitano is
also chairman of tour operator
Quo Vadis, and up to 50 per
cent of Mediterranean
Express' capacity next
summer will probably be used
flying to Italy for that
company.
The aircraft, BAe One-
Eleven 400s which have been
in service with Faucett in
Peru, are now on lease in the
USA. They will be completely
serviced and then hushkitted
in the UK, says Capt Peter
Ecob, in charge of
Mediterranean's operations.
The hushkits are to arrive by
the end of this year.
As a new arrival
Mediterranean had great
difficulty getting slots at
Gatwick, says Capt Ecob.
There were not enough slots
available to keep two aircraft
busy. "The only useful way of
using them was to use Luton
and Gatwick together," says
Capt Ecob.
Operations should start in
May. The company hopes to
be able to do two round trips a
day with each aircraft over the
summer. Some 350 pilots have
replied to advertisements so
far. Managing director James
McDivitt sees "a growing
demand for specialised
medium-small inclusive tour
groups".

4 FLIGHT INTERNATIONAL, 27 December 1986