



Airliner deliveries grounded as Boeing strike begins to bite

Strike pressure

GUY NORRIS/LOS ANGELES

PRESSURE IS MOUNTING on Boeing to settle with striking workers, as the production backlog begins to build up and deliveries slow to a trickle.

Boeing managed to deliver 11 aircraft in November and 14 in October despite the strike by 32,000 machinists and aerospace workers over job security, wages and health cover. The action, however, has already delayed delivery of around 15 airliners and held up production of another 40.

Boeing declines to comment on the situation, except to say that "...any time you have 32,000 people on strike, it's going to have an impact". It adds: "Since the last offer was turned down, no talks have been scheduled."

The company has been able to maintain some momentum in its delivery schedule by using man-

agement staff to complete aircraft which were virtually at the end of the production lines when the strike began. These aircraft, and the aircraft which had been in their acceptance phase, have now been sucked out of the system, leaving Boeing with a gap of probably 30-60 days before it can resume reasonable deliveries once the strike ends.

While the current delivery delays are of serious concern, the company is thought to be even more worried about the long-term production implications, particularly for the 737 and 777 lines. As the strike drags into its third month, Boeing faces the possibility of losing production of around 20 737s and ten 777s by the end of the year.

The impact on the fledgling 777 programme, of which only nine have been delivered, is most severe, as production was reaching

Canadian Airbus scandal deepens

THE FORMER CHAIRMAN of the company which brokered the sale of 34 Airbus A320s to Air Canada has said that he set up a Swiss bank account to funnel Airbus kickback money to former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. Mulroney denies the bribery allegation and has filed a C\$50 million (\$37 million) libel suit against the Canadian Government, which the Government says it will contest.

Speaking on a Canadian television programme, former International Aircraft Leasing (IAL) chairman Georgio Pelossi said that he opened two numbered accounts for Canadian lobbyist Frank Moores and claims that he was told that one of the accounts was for Mulroney.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police is investigating allegations of an agreement between Airbus and IAL requiring a secret side payment of \$500,000 per aircraft sold to Air Canada. The C\$1.8 million aircraft deal was signed in 1988. □

Airbus extends widebody family

JULIAN MOXON/PARIS

AIRBUS INDUSTRIE HAS launched the shortened, longer-range, version of its twin-engined A330 widebody and confirmed its development of the ultra-long range A340-8000.

The A330-200 is scheduled to be flown for the first time in the middle of 1997, and to be ready for service entry in the second quarter of 1988. There are still no orders for the type, but Airbus says that a similar situation existed in the run-up to the launch of the A319, which entered the market with orders for just six aircraft (from International Lease Finance), and which has now clocked up 81 sales. The consortium says that there is a market for "up to 3,000" aircraft in the 250- to 300-seat category over the next 20 years. The A340-200 is competing with aircraft such as the 767-300 ER.

The A330-200 will undergo a 300h flight-test programme involving engine offerings from



Airbus confirms its commitment to ultra-long-range A340

General Electric, Pratt & Whitney and Rolls-Royce. Development cost is put at around \$450 million. Airbus declines to say whether the programme will be funded internally, or if it will require at least some Government financing. The A319, which cost \$275 million to develop, was the first Airbus to be completely internally funded.

The main change in the A330-200 is a reduction in fuselage length of ten frames, or 5.33m, reducing capacity to 256 passengers (in three classes) against 335 for the standard aircraft. Range is increased to 11,800km (6,400nm),

against 8,300km for the A330-300, take-off weight being increased by 13t, to 230t.

The A340-8000 is an even longer-range version of the increased-range A340-200, with strengthened wings to enable the carriage of up to three extra fuel tanks in the forward part of the rear cargo hold. This confers a range of 15,000km, against 13,700km for the A340-200, with 230 seats in a three-class configuration.

Airbus launched the programme in September, but did not formally announce the move until the A330 variant was unveiled. □