Fokker seeks more funds

AMSTERDAM

Fokker is seeking additional funds from the Dutch Government and its banks to help it over its cash flow problems. Fokker says changes in the Fokker 50 and Fokker 100 specifications and the subsequent delay to both programmes means the development costs have been “going up considerably and have been an extra burden on Fokker’s financial resources”. Both aircraft have been developed simultaneously and are entering service within a few months of each other. The first Fokker 50 was delivered to DLT in August and the first Fokker 100 is to be delivered to Swissair in January.

The low value of the US Dollar against the Dutch Guilder has also affected the aircraft sale prices, although the manufacturer says it will not be felt for a few years. Nevertheless, industry sources suggest that a reduction in its 11,000 workforce may take place, to bring down costs and hence prices by about 10 per cent.

On October 13 Fokker’s shares were suspended on the Amsterdam exchange after rumours of Fokker’s weak position. Fokker’s shares dropped from NFI 57.50 to NFI 47 in a day. The Dutch exchange suspends shares more readily than other markets at the release of price sensitive information.

Fokker expects to make a small loss this year. It had a NFI 3 million loss in the first six months of the 1987 financial year. The Netherlands Government has funded the Fokker projects with grants and guaranteed loans of about NFI 1 billion so far, Fokker tells Flight.

MBB and Fokker have decided to jointly explore mutual co-operation as equal partners. The objective is to come to a joint production strategy for a range of existing and future aircraft using both company’s specific capabilities.

Dowty to build UDF blades

CHELTENHAM

Dowty Rotol has signed a cooperative agreement with General Electric to design, develop and manufacture the all-composite blades for GE36 Unducted Fan (UDF) engine. Dowty Rotol does not yet know how many blades will be required and does not think anyone knows or has projected what the demand for the UDF will be. Dowty’s initial development investment is “very small” at only £2 million but it will be more substantial at later stages, it says.

General Electric says Dowty Rotol’s in-service experience with composite propeller blades, combined with its design and manufacturing technology, meets its requirements. Dowty Rotol says it will play a significant role in the development of the optimum fan blade configuration and the advanced manufacturing process”. Production could start as early as 1990.

ATI ATR42 crashes

MILAN

Italian aviation authority officials are investigating last week’s loss of an ATR42, which crashed in mountains north of Milan, killing all 34 passengers and three crew on board.

The ATR42, which was operated by ATI, the wholly-owned domestic subsidiary of Alitalia, was on a scheduled flight from Milan’s Linate airport to Cologne and Bonn when it crashed near the southern end of Lake Como. The cause of the crash was not immediately apparent, though both the flight recorders were recovered, and are now being examined.

Scotland receives patrol F.27-200

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland has taken delivery of this fishery surveillance Fokker F.27-200 to counter illegal fishing. With INS, Ferranti Seaspray Mk3 radar, and cameras the F.27 will detect, locate, and photograph vessels suspected of illegal fishing, for possible prosecution.