

bilateral battle

tions on a new passenger agreement when he visits Japan in April.

The group appears to have gained broad support from All Nippon Airways (ANA), which, like the US airlines, is not an incumbent under the 1952 treaty and therefore suffers from capacity constraints as well.

ANA president Seiji Fukatsu says that the two sides should "...avoid the outdated rhetoric of protectionism" and move towards "...greatly expanding competition and opportunities".

The need for a new passenger agreement is gaining an added urgency with the prospect of a new runway being added at Narita Airport, Tokyo's heavily congested international gateway.

The new runway would add around another 100,000 slots a year to the airport. JAL is determined to

make use of this rare opportunity to increase its presence at what should be its dominant international hub. The carrier complains that US airlines now hold nearly one-third of existing slots, while it has only 27% and ANA 8%.

In order to maintain its share, JAL is pressing for half the new slots, says Sugimoto. He believes that ANA and other Asian or European carriers seeking to expand or enter the airport should be given priority over US carriers.

The runway's completion is still being blocked by local protesters, but a solution could be nearing with closed-door talks now taking place between the Japanese authorities and the airport protesters. No timescale has yet been set, but consensus within Japan is that the capacity will have been added by around 2000. □



JAL takes keys of first 777

JAPAN AIRLINES WAS HANDED the keys to its first Boeing 777-200 at a ceremony in Seattle on 16 February. The aircraft, which has 389 mainly economy seats, will begin services between Tokyo's domestic hub at Haneda and Kagoshima on 26 April. The airline has ten 777-200s on order and another ten options, as well as five 777-300s which will start to arrive in 1998, replacing older 747SRs on dense domestic routes. JAL says that it could eventually use the 777 on international services but there is no firm timescale for such a move. Boeing is also keen to interest the carrier in the proposed long-range 777-100X. The next major ordering round for the long-haul fleet is likely to be deferred until there is a decision on the second runway at Tokyo's international gateway at Narita.

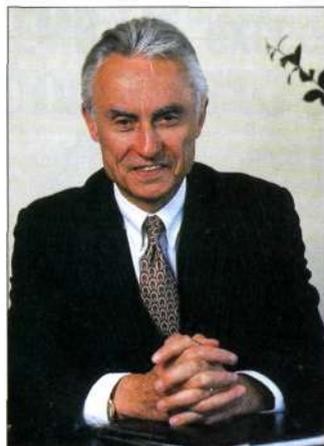
'Bitter' union conflicts force Sabena chairman to resign

SABENA CHAIRMAN and chief executive Pierre Godfroid has resigned to be replaced by Swissair executive Paul Reutlinger. Godfroid ran into a bitter dogfight between the management and the airline unions over a controversial restructuring plan involving a pay freeze and longer working hours. Two other senior Sabena managers have been told to quit.

Godfroid's attempt to push through the controversial 1995-2000 business plan and the continuing impasse between the two sides after a series of damaging strikes, in spite of the intervention of the Belgian authorities, has finally forced his resignation.

The unions blamed the inflexible approach of the Sabena boss in trying to bulldoze through the more-work-for-less-pay plan.

Reutlinger now Swissair executive vice-president marketing and ground services, hopes for a



Godfroid: plans blocked by strikes

renewed impetus in the stalled talks with the unions. He has already made clear that the business plan remains in force.

Other management changes agreed at the 26 February board meeting include the appointment

of Jan Huyghebaert as chairman — he now heads Belgian holding company Almanijm. Chief operating officer Gery Daeninck and Raymond Aelvoet, executive vice-president flight operations, have each lost their jobs. Reutlinger's place on the Sabena board is being taken by Swissair's chief operating officer Philippe Brugisser.

Sabena, 49.5% owned by Swissair, did better than expected in 1995, posting a consolidated deficit of BFr530 million (\$17.5m) in 1995, compared to BFr1.22 billion in 1994.

The result includes an operating profit of BFr3 million, in spite of 29 days of industrial action by Sabena staff, firemen and air traffic controllers at Brussels Airport.

Consolidated results for the Sabena Group show a loss of BFr1.62 billion, with the airline suffering a loss after provisions of BFr1.98 billion. □

World accidents and incidents fell in 1995

PRELIMINARY statistics from the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) show that airline fatal accidents and security-related incidents declined in 1995.

The scheduled airlines of the 184 contracting states of ICAO experienced 26 accidents involving passenger fatalities, compared with 28 fatal accidents in 1994. The number of fatalities came down from 941, to 710, while deaths per 100 million passenger-kilometres declined from 0.045 to 0.03.

The biggest reduction was recorded in the number of hijackings and other unlawful interference. In 1995, 13 such incidents were officially reported in which two innocent people and one perpetrator were injured.

This compares to 37 incidents in 1994, in which 31 people were killed and 52 injured. Five perpetrators met their deaths and one received injuries. □