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## Second plane in landing gear glitch

### Bombardier faces fresh problems with turboprops

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BUSINESS REPORTER

It's been a difficult week overseas for Bombardier Inc. after a second Japanese airline reported landing gear problems with one of the aerospace firm's turboprops.

Pilots flying a Bombardier-built DHC-8-103 turboprop, or Dash-8, operated by Japan's Amakusa Airlines Co., were forced to drop the plane's landing gear manually yesterday after the aircraft's automatic system malfunctioned, according to Japan's transport ministry. The plane landed safely at Kumamoto Airport in Japan. Nobody was injured.

Barely one week ago another Bombardier turboprop, this time a larger Q400 model operated by Japan's All Nippon Airways, experienced a landing gear malfunction that forced pilots to make an emergency landing with the nose gear retracted, creating a shower of sparks.

Marc Holloran, a spokesman for Montreal-based Bombardier, said it was too soon to draw a link between the two incidents. "They are not related in the sense that the manual redundancy system worked on this occasion," he said. "That's what it's there for."

He added that while both aircraft belonged to the same family of planes, they are equipped with different landing gear assemblies, built by different suppliers. Holloran said Bombardier will look into yesterday's incident as more information becomes available.

Meanwhile, a Transport Canada spokeswoman said the federal agency views yesterday's incident in Japan as an anomaly and is not planning any further action. Bombardier has built nearly 300 Dash-8-100s since the plane's first flight in 1983, Holloran said.

While Air Canada's regional carrier Jazz operates 36 Dash-8-100s, Debra Williams, a Jazz spokeswoman, said Jazz is not planning extra inspections. "We believe this is a safe aircraft."

As for the Q400, Bombardier's biggest and most advanced turboprop, the only Canadian operator using the aircraft is Toronto's Porter Airlines, which last week said it conducted emergency inspections following the All Nippon incident, but found no problems.

Porter did, however, report an incident in early December in which pilots manually extended a Q400's landing gear, but CEO Robert Deluce said the decision to override the automatic system was done as a precaution.

Bombardier has acknowledged some "teething problems" with the Q400 – particularly in Japan, where some reports suggest there have been as many as 72 separate incidents, ranging from faulty lighting to landing gear issues. The Q400 is built at Bombardier's Downsview plant in Toronto. As of Jan. 31, Bombardier said it had 200 orders for the plane, with 143 already delivered.

Bombardier said last week it was sending specialists to Japan to help the airline investigate the circumstances that led to its emergency landing – an event that prompted the Japanese government to order emergency inspections of all Bombardier Q400 aircraft in the country.

Natalie Sarafian, a spokeswoman for the Minister of Transport, said Transport Canada is keeping an eye on that inquiry.

With files from Matthew Chung