The New Steamships Thorjerd and Blaamyra.

Two sister steel freight vessels are being built at Port Arthur, Ont., for unnamed owners. Their dimensions are: Length over all, 261 ft.; length between perpendiculars 251 ft.; breadth moulded 43 ft.; depth moulded 28 ft. 2 in.; carrying capacity about 3,000 gross tons.

They will be of the single deck type, with poop, bridge and forecastle, steel deckhouse on bridge deck and chart room on top of deckhouse, with navigating bridge. They are being built on the transverse system of construction. There will be two cargo holds with two hatches in each hold. No. 1 hold will extend from collision bulkhead to boiler room bulkhead and no. 2 hold from engine room bulkhead to after peak bulkhead. The propelling machinery will be located amidships. The double bottom will be 3 ft. deep and will extend from collision bulkhead to after peak bulkhead, divided by transverse water or oil tight floors into a number of compartments. Part of the double bottom will be utilized to carry fuel oil, the remainder of the fuel to be carried in wing tanks, which can also be used for coal. The officers and crew will be berthed amidships on bridge deck, where also will be the mess rooms, galley, pantry, lavatories, etc. The firemen and sailors will have their quarters aft on main deck.

The two main boilers will be of the Scotch marine type, single ended, and arranged abreast. They will be 14 ft. 8 in. diam. by 11 ft. long and will have a combined grate area of 126 sq. ft. Each boiler will have three corrugated furnaces, of the suspension type, 42 in. inside diam. They will be fitted for natural draft.

The propelling machinery will consist of triple expansion engine with surface condensers, built-in type, 3 cylinders each, working each on a separate crank placed at an angle of 120 degrees. The slide motion will be of the Stephenson link type. Cylinders 20, 33 and 54 in., with a stroke of 40 in. The average working horse power will be 1,200, maximum 1,300. The high pressure cylinder will have piston valve, the low and intermediate will have double ported slide valves with relief frames, and the low pressure one will have a Lovekin assistant cylinder. The high pressure cylinder will be supplied with a loose bushing of hard cast iron. All cylinders will have relief valves, top and bottom, discharging into the atmosphere. The turning gear will consist of a single cylinder engine, driving through worm gearing, a shaft mounted on sliding cast steel worm. The propeller will be of cast iron, solid section, with four blades. The air pump will be bolted to the back column of the engine.

The steam steering gear will be placed on the main deck in the engine room. There will also be a hand steering gear aft. There will be a 8 x 6 in. steam windlass fitted with hand attachment and friction brakes. All anchors will be of the stockless type, of size in accordance with Lloyd's requirements. To facilitate the handling of the cargo there will be six 7 x 12 in. reversible steam winches, and 6 derrick booms to lift 4 tons each.

The vessels will be fitted throughout with electric light. One 7½ k.w. generator will be fitted in engine room. All wires, with the exception of those in cabins, will be enclosed in conduit, with outlets terminating in watertight fixtures. In the cabins the wire will be run in wood mouldings.

The vessels are being built by the Western Dry Dock & Ship Building Co., Ltd., to take the highest class in Lloyd's Registry and under their special survey. The Thorjerd was launched Sept. 27, and the Blaamyra during October.

Stranding of the s.s. Matatua.

An investigation into the cause of the stranding of the Shaw, Savill and Albion Co.'s s.s. Matatua in St. Mary's Bay, Nfld., July 22, was held at Halifax, N.S., recently, by Capt. L. A. Demers, Dominion Wreck Commissioner, assisted by Commander E. Wyatt, R.N.R., and Lieutenant R. H. Wright, R.N.V.R., as nautical assessors. The evidence brought out that the master, Capt. Jas. MacFie, upon reaching St. John, N.B., to take command of the Matatua, after the death of her former master, was stricken with paralysis on the left side of his face, and acknowledged that he was not in a fit state to take command, but seeing he was on the spot, he did not want to give it up; a fire partially destroyed the vessel, a series of explosions occurred on board which had the effect of tearing her decks, bending frames and causing other injuries, and she sank, resting on the bottom of the dock in St. John with the falling and rising tides, her compasses, standard and steering were also injured. Upon leaving St. John an adjuster was called to adjust the compasses, but it is evident that none of the officers watched the operation. The vessel proceeded to Halifax, where she underwent some temporary repairs, new plates being put in and patches made here and there, all of which tended to disturb the induced and permanent magnetism of the vessel. Then the master discovered that the magnet for correcting the heeling error had not been placed, therefore the adjustment for that particular correction had not been installed, and consequently the compass was not adjusted. During her course from Fame Point, which was traced with the intention of passing between Cape North and St. Paul's Island, the master found after experiencing some hazy weather, that he passed to the north side of St. Paul's Island, which meant that the vessel had outrun her distance; then a course was traced for Sydney, N.S., which apparently was made good. He left Sydney, July 21, and when passing Flint Island a departure was made by a cross and four point bearing and the log was set. The vessel was kept on her course, and full speed was maintained during fog, until just before she grounded the next morning. The master was supplied with a new set of charts as well as sailing directions by his London office, but he never consulted them. He had sailed in these waters before but not on this particular route.

The court could not understand why a man of the ability of the master omitted to take elementary precautions in navigating his vessel. In view of the uncertainty which should have existed in his mind, the court thought it apparent that navigating his vessel through the Gulf of St. Lawrence until he reached the ocean demanded unusual caution on his part. Had he read his sailing directions he would have found that at a certain period of the year, in the Cabot Strait, the current has a trend northward, which is amply proved in the present case, and he would surely not have kept his vessel at full speed in a thick fog, and without casting a lead. It is not permissible for a master to navigate his vessel in a fog for a number of hours without diminishing his speed if necessary to take soundings, and frequent soundings, to check his courses. He stated that he did not think it was necessary as he considered himself at sea and that the soundings were not reliable. The court contradicted this statement, as it was aware that vessels carrying passengers and coming to Canada, after making Cape Race, or entering Cabot Strait, are led entirely by the lead. Soundings, although irregular, if a chain of them be taken, will show without doubt the position of a vessel, and the existence of whatever elements there may be to influence the vessel outside the course presumed. It could not find any excuse for the master failing to take soundings, even though he was short of tubes for his sounding apparatus, because he had a deep sea lead, and could use it as was done before sounding machines were invented. So far as the evidence went the court was of opinion that the necessary means were adopted to free the vessel after she grounded. The condemnation by the court is based purely on the action of the master in not acting in a prudent and careful manner. In fact, without hesitation, the court stated that the vessel was carelessly navigated in view of the possible conditions existing, and it was of the opinion that from the outset, the master was not in a fit condition to assume the grave responsiblity which devolved upon him. The duty of the court would not be complete and its existence would not be justified if it did not condemn the master for faulty navigation, and therefore, though it had a great deal of sympathy with him in his affliction, as he accepted the responsibility, the court suspended his certificate for three months from Sept. 15 to Dec. 15.

Discontinuance of Lights and Fog Alarms for the Winter.

All Canadian light and fog alarms on the St. Lawrence River above Montreal, Lakes Ontario, Erie, St. Clair, Huron, Georgian Bay, Lake Superior ad connecting waters, will be maintained in operation until the morning of Dec. 25, excepting the southeast shoal lightship, Lake Erie, which may be forced to abandon her station by ice conditions before the general close of navigation, and also at Lonely Island, Georgian Bay, from which the keeper may be removed before the close of navigation, also certain stations on Lake Superior, viz., Slate Islands, Battle Island, Lamb Island, Shaganash, Point Porphyry, Thunder Cape, Welcome Islands, Pie Island and Victoria Island, which will close after the last sailings to or from Port Arthur and Fort William. All gas buoys and other floating aids to navigation will be maintained in position as long as ice conditions will permit, and in cases where it is necessary to remove gas buoys before the close of navigation the more important ones will be replaced by spars. Light keepers are cautioned to maintain their stations in operation until the time mentioned above, viz., the morning of Dec. 25.

Norman A. Rule, Treasurer, Standard Shipping Co. Ltd., Winnipeg, writes: "I feel that the regular receipt of the Canadian Railway and Marine World is instructive to all of us."