

MOLESWORTH, THOMAS NEPEAN, surveyor and engineer; b. 24 June 1824 in Moy, County Armagh, Ireland, son of Arthur Nepean Molesworth and Harriett Hawkins; d. 24 April 1879 in Toronto, Ont.

Thomas Nepean Molesworth is said by earlier writers to have attended Trinity College, Dublin, but the college records do not bear out this claim. He was, apparently, apprenticed to Williby Hemans under whom he learned civil engineering. Having acquired a trade, and married Sarah Georgina Kertland, Molesworth in 1848 emigrated to Canada.

Molesworth's first employment in Canada was teaching school at Trafalgar, near Oakville, Canada West. He soon moved to Goderich (the centre for the developing counties of Huron, Grey, and Bruce), qualified as a provincial land surveyor in 1851, and established a practice which he maintained until 1858. Molesworth was also retained for several public projects; in 1852–56 he surveyed parts of St Joseph and Bear islands in Lake Huron and laid out the town plots of Wingham and St Joseph. He formed a partnership in 1856 with Thomas Weatherald, which lasted about nine years, and the next year surveyed part of the north shore of Lake Superior.

In 1858 Molesworth became chief engineer of the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway (which had its western terminus at Goderich) and he moved to Brantford, the company's headquarters, in 1859. He moved to Fort Erie in 1863, where he helped survey and plan the International Bridge, and went into the employ of the Grand Trunk Railway. His home at Fort Erie was damaged in a Fenian attack in 1866.

Molesworth was retained by the Department of Public Works of Ontario in 1868 and 1869 to survey swamp lands in Kent and Essex counties. In 1870 he became assistant engineer of the department and moved to Toronto. In his new capacity he was largely concerned with drawing up reports on the status of canal, road, and drainage projects. From 1874 until his death in 1879 he was chief engineer of public works for Ontario, concerned mainly with reports regarding the inspection of railways, which had to meet established standards of quality as well as specific construction deadlines to qualify for provincial aid.

Molesworth had seven children, one of whom, Balfour Nepean, also became a provincial land surveyor.

[STEPHEN F. SPENCER](#)

PAO, J. C. Bailey papers, 29 Nov. 1876, 27 Nov. 1877, 8 Jan. 1878; RG 15, ser. IV-2 (Assistant engineer's letter book, 1870-73). Ontario, Dept. of Public Works, *Annual Reports*, 1874-79. *Burke's peerage* (1924), 1596-97. H. L. Esten, "Balfour Nepean Molesworth," Ont. Land Surveyors Assoc., *Annual Report*, no.47 (1932), 123-25. "Thomas Nepean Molesworth," Ont. Land Surveyors Assoc., *Annual Report*, no.35 (1920), 109-10.