

'Canada can only be described as a win, win, win!'



Claims Consultant/Contracts Manager,
Canada

I was offered the opportunity to relocate from London to Canada to work on a major power transmission project – or rather two separate projects by the same contractor involving the construction of four substations at either end of two high voltage DC lines.

My role was varied and I was a contract/commercial hybrid – primarily responsible for the contracts for a number of work packages (piling, earth-works, structures, cladding, building and M&E fit-out – as well as some smaller suppliers and contractors). This included everything from; interim payment applications, drafting contractual letters, arguing over scope, valuing change orders and claims, putting in place systems to monitor progress and back-charges, putting together counter claims (some of which involved complex delay analysis), advising the client on the contract for strategic purposes, insurance claims and agreeing the final accounts.

As well as this I was tasked with developing contractual documentation for tenders, negotiating contracts and issuing letters of intent. Furthermore I was responsible for putting together a variety of claims against designers, suppliers and some contractors – which involved work with in-house and external counsel.

I spent most of my time on one of the sites – but there were trips to the other site (450km away) and to the main office in Calgary. Towards the end of the project, when the site work was mostly complete, I was primarily Calgary based.

Coming straight from London to Alberta is something of a culture shock! East of Calgary consists of thousands of miles of wide open plains as far as the eye can see and further still.

There is a strong cowboy atmosphere – with lots of oil rigs, Stetsons, cattle, horses and cowboy boots. West of Calgary are the Rocky Mountains with the beautiful towns of Banff and Canmore, mountain lakes Lake Louise and Waterton as well as glaciers and provincial parks. There is also a lot of wildlife – everything from moose and deer to wolves and bears. (While out hiking, coming across the first sign stating: "bears beyond this point, anyone found travelling in groups of less than four will be prosecuted" was rather interesting!).



One of the great things that Calgary offers is the skiing – in Calgary, you are an hour and a half away from the ski-slopes – and the season runs from November to May. Working with a large group of people who've just arrived for the project, it is easy to arrange trips for the weekend – a couple of texts, then pack up your things and drive.

The Rocky Mountains themselves are spectacular and taking a road trip to Vancouver through the lush forests and mountain roads, and possibly on to Victoria and Vancouver Island to see the whales is highly recommended. Besides that, flights to Las Vegas and San Francisco are cheap – so there is always a good opportunity to travel if you want.

As you've probably guessed by now, I have really enjoyed my experience in Canada, I have also had the opportunity to work in Toronto (for a shorter time) and took in some trips to Vancouver and Ottawa while I was there - again I would happily recommend both of these locations and hope to return there again soon.

Working in Canada has also allowed me to add "international experience" to my CV – which has given other foreign clients confidence in my ability for international work. International exposure has undoubtedly improved my skillset which I will be able to benefit from in the future.

Furthermore, given that Qs don't exist in Canada, you tend to get roles of greater responsibility and gain valuable experience that you may not necessarily get from working in the UK.

As such moving to Canada can only be described as a win, win, win.

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