

The Canadian Participation at the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition

The Franco-British Exhibition of 1908 was an occasion for France and Great Britain to showcase their colonies and resources. Canada was invited to display its industry and vast riches with its pavilions and popular attractions.

This exhibit illustrates how Canada's wealth was displayed at this Franco-British Exhibition. Canadian resources and industry were highlighted through its exhibits and its popularity enhanced by its entertaining rides such as the Scenic Railway and the Canadian Toboggan Run.

The Olympic stadium, shown in conclusion, was also built in the Sheperd's Bush district as part of the F.-B. Exhibition and Canada was amongst the 22 nations attending those London Games.

Most of the postcards shown here were produced by the official postcard manufacturer of the Franco-British Exhibition, Valentine & Sons Ltd. Many are numbered but not always in a consecutive manner.

Plan: A -Introduction to Franco-British Exhibition
B -The Canadian Pavilions
C -Exhibition Attractions
D -Olympic Stadium

Deltiological information relating to the postcard will appear in this italicised Comic Sans MS font.



Canadian Pavilion, Franco-British Exhibition, London 1908,
card #429, Valentine's Series, Used, Undivided Back,
published by Valentines & Sons Ltd. of Dundee, London & New York.

A - The Franco-British Exhibition was held in London's Shepherd's Bush area, between May and October of 1908, as part of the Entente Cordiale agreement signed between the two countries. Canada, as part of the British Empire, was one of the main courts visited at this exhibition.



CANADA COURT

Franco-British Exhibition, London, 1908

CANADA COURT Franco-British Exhibition, London 1908
Unused sepia post card with divided back, unidentified British publisher.

Situated in the west section of the grounds, the Canadian Pavilion can be seen just beyond the expansive Machinery Hall on this official Exhibition postcard.



Entente Cordiale/Franco-British Exhibition London 1908
Entrance to Machinery Hall, Official Exhibition Post Card pub. by Valentine & Sons Ltd., Used,
Divided back

It contained 60 000 square feet of rich displays reflecting the size and importance of the colony. The fair was the largest exhibition of its kind ever hosted in Britain and the first international exhibition that was organized and sponsored by two countries. The exhibition buildings were constructed on 140 acres of land in Shepherd's Bush in West London (a bit more than the Calgary Stampede grounds).



Canadian Pavilion, Valentine 's Series, Black & White, Unused, Divided Back



The Canadian Pavilion, Franco-British Exhibition, Colorized Real Photo PC #22, EA Series, E. Alexander, London, W.C., printed in France, Used, Divided Back.

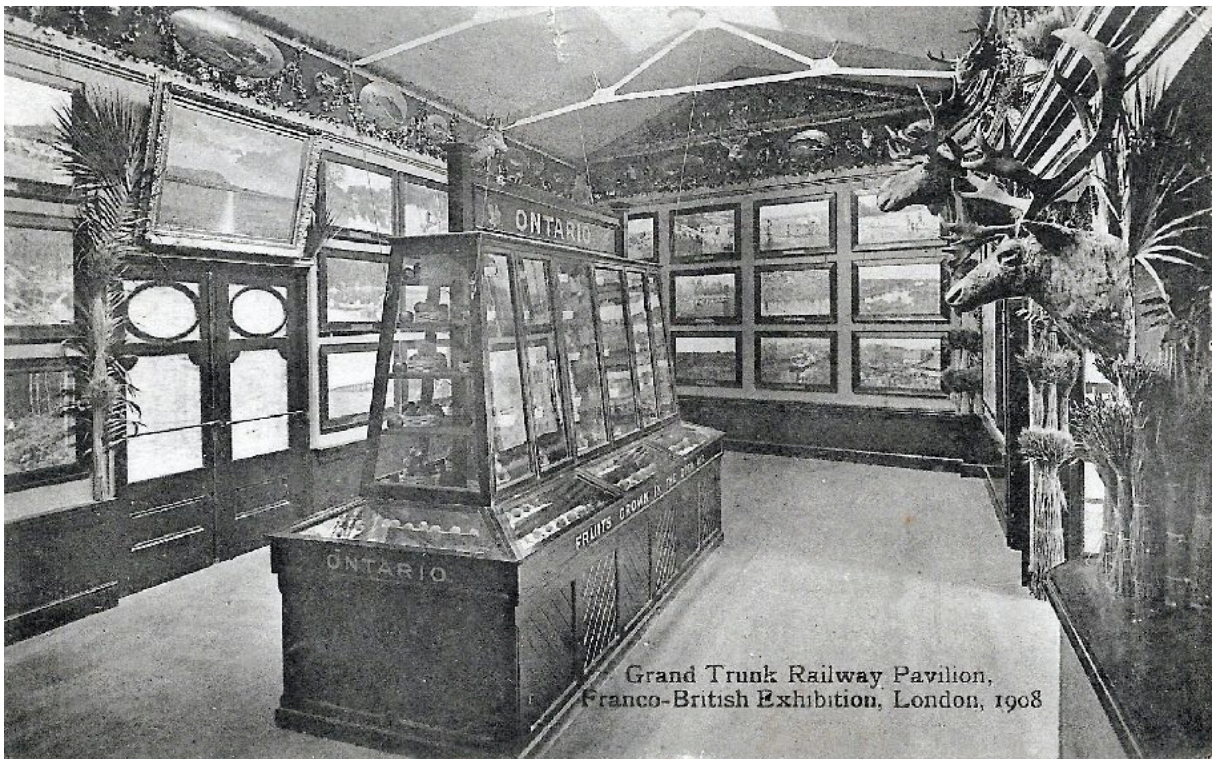
The Canadian Pavilion was reborn as the Japan Wrestling Arena for the 1910 Japan-British Ex.

B - A view of the Canadian Pacific Pavilion demonstrating how the Canadian Pacific Company promoted its transportation network across the country and as a gateway to exotic lands.



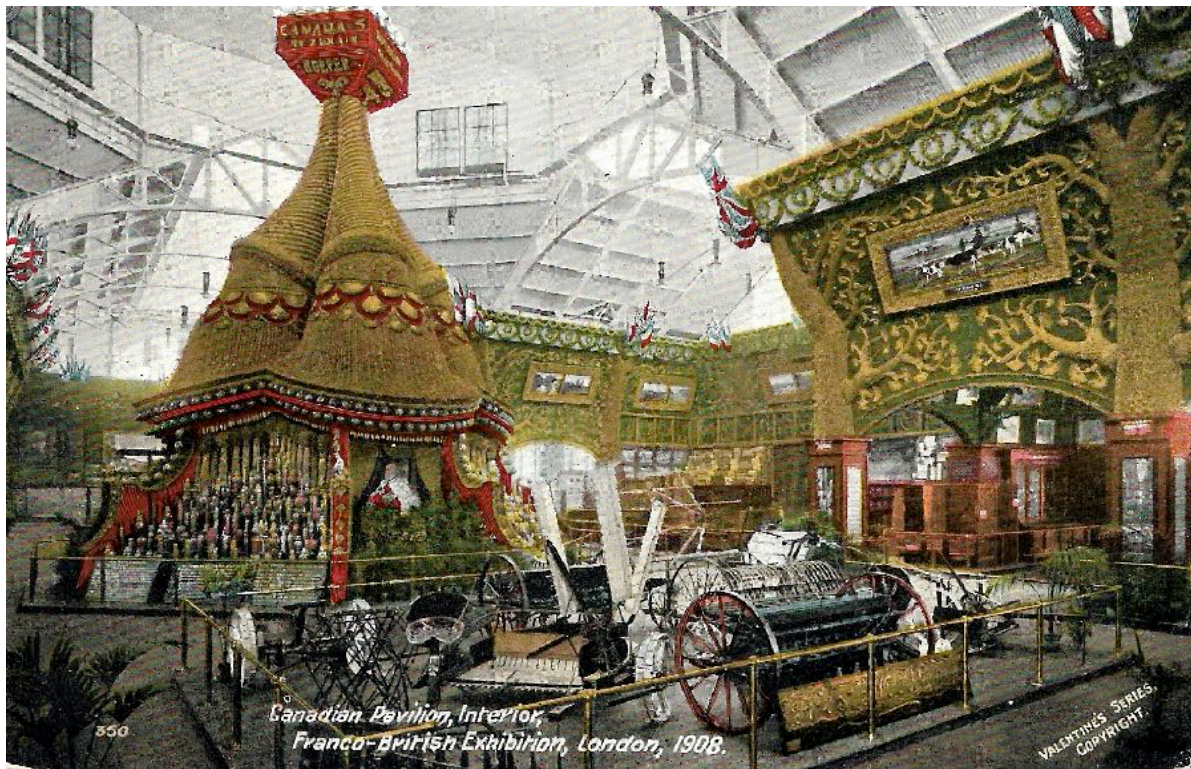
Canadian Pacific Pavilion, card #309, Valentine's Series,
Official Post Card, Unused, Divided Back, printed by Valentine & Sons Ltd.

The Grand Trunk Railway Company is another important transportation company that also participated in this exhibition. Although Valentine identified this card as the Grand Trunk Railway Pavilion, it was probably misidentified since it portrays an Ontario fruit display instead.



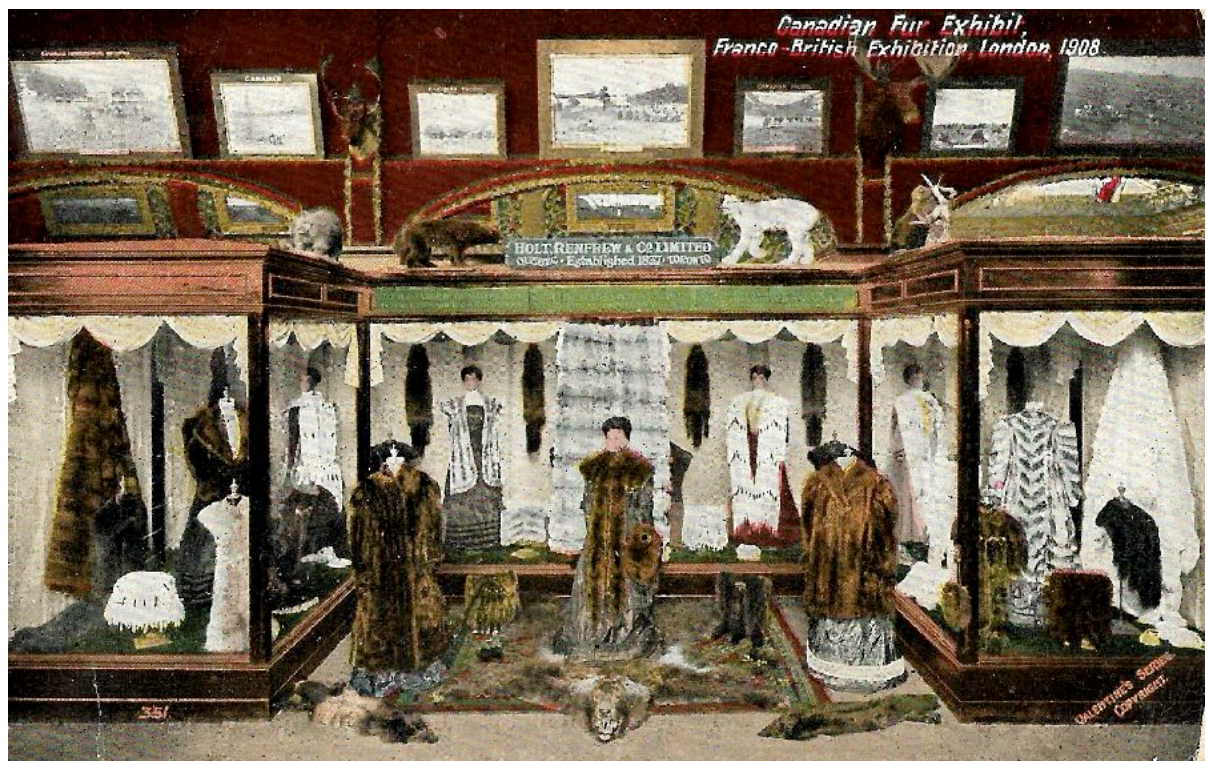
Grand Trunk Railway Pavilion, Valentine Series, Used, Divided Back, Valentine & Sons Ltd.

General view of Canadian Pavilion interior showcasing many resources and in the forefront the Red Grain Hopper and agricultural machinery.

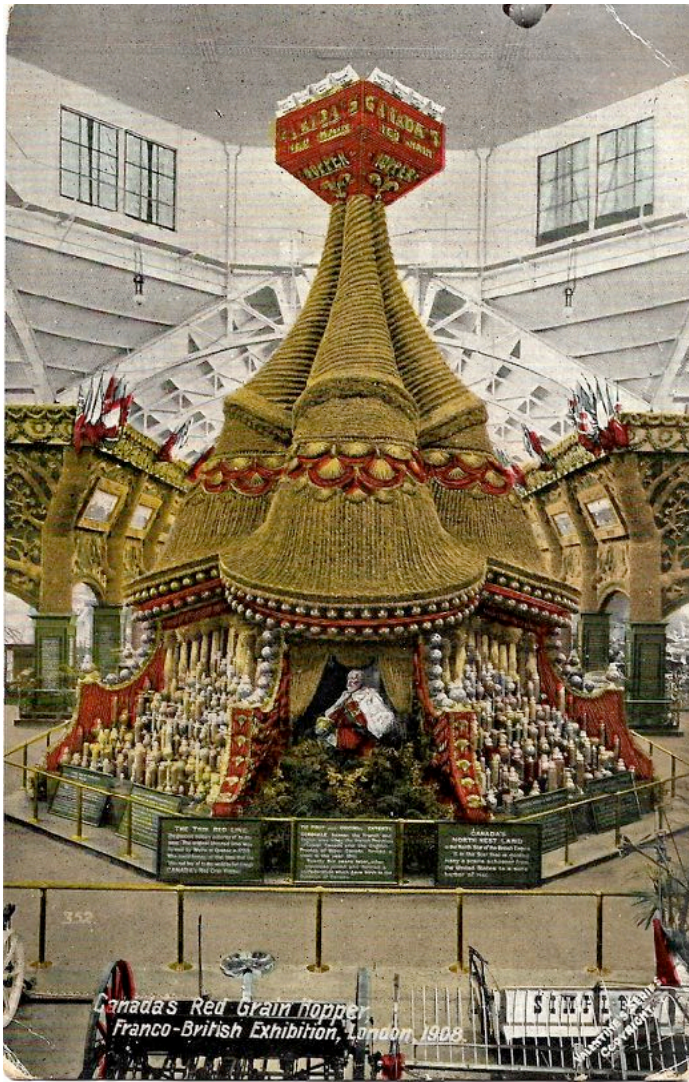


Canadian Pavilion, Interior, Card # 350, Valentine's Series, Unused, Undivided Back

Throughout the Canadian Pavilion, mounted fur animals decorated the exhibits. Holt, Renfrew & Co, Limited sponsored this display of fur clothing undoubtedly for an affluent European clientele.



Canadian Pavilion, South West Section, Card #351, Valentine's Series, Unused, Undivided back



Canada's Red Grain Hopper is set over a representation of King Edward VII's throne. Historical information panels at the base relate how the French and English have been cooperating since the mid 19th century to develop the riches of the Dominion of Canada.

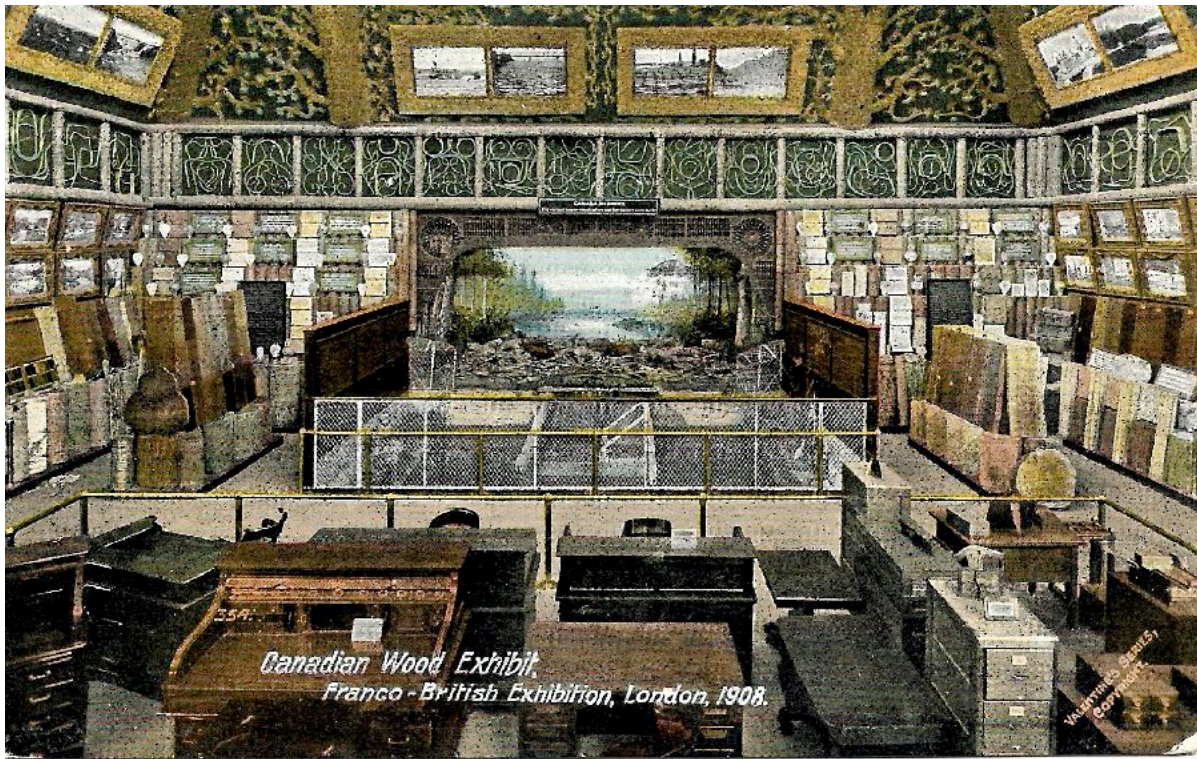
Canada's Red Grain Hopper, Card #352, Valentine's Series, Used, Undivided Back

Given the "unlimited Canadian resources", many manufactured products were available including these pianos and organs as seen in the south west section of the Pavilion.



Canadian Pavilion, South West Section, Card #353, Valentine's Series, Unused, Undivided Back

Displays of various wood species and products with samples of cut lumber and logs. A central mural showing beavers in their natural habitat. This animal's fur was a long-time export to Great Britain for the confection of beaver felt hats, among other things.



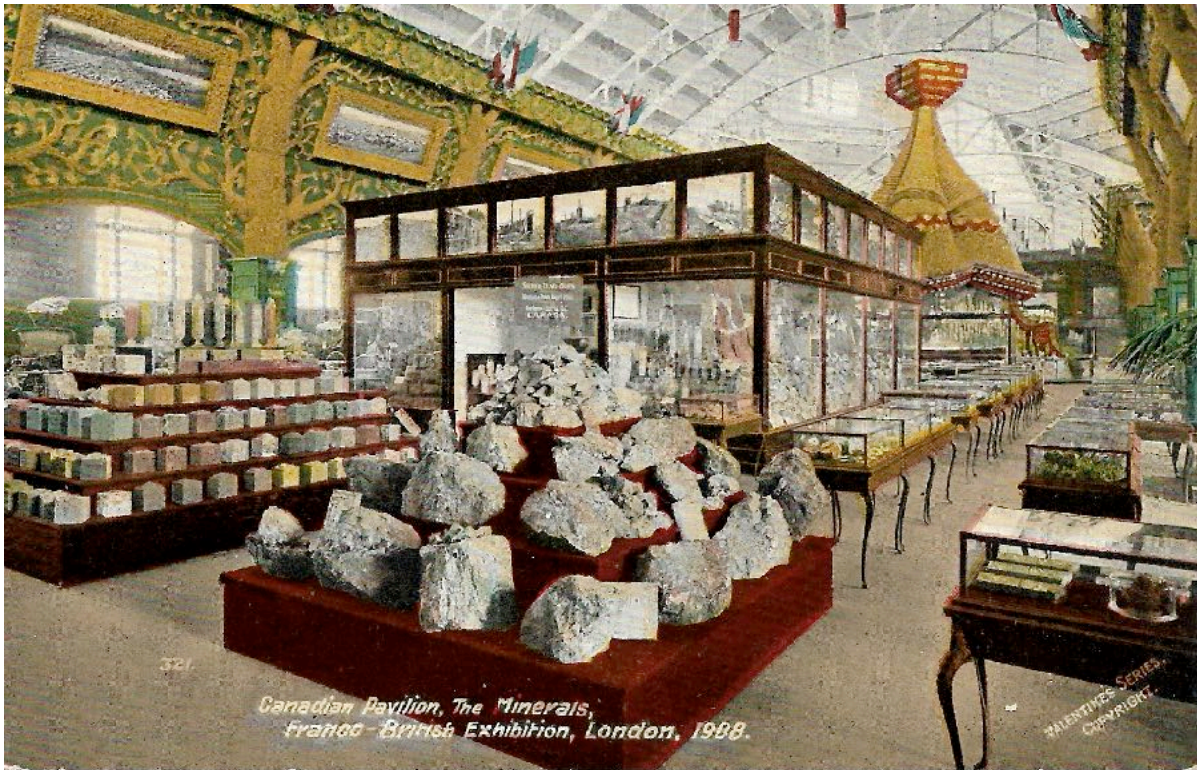
Canadian Wood Exhibit, Card #354, Valentine's Series, Unused, Undivided Back.

Part of the Red Grain Hopper display showing a model of Queen Alexandra and a display of wood furniture.



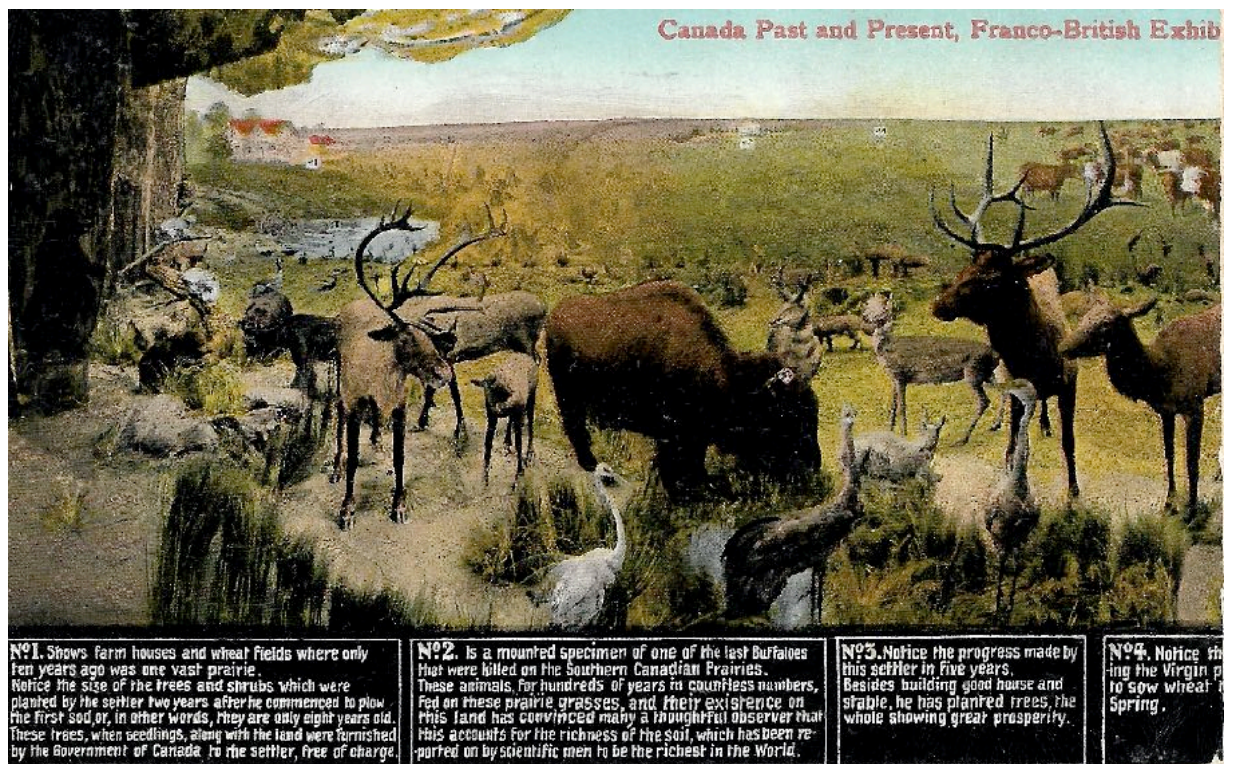
South Section, Canadian Pavilion, Card #410, Valentine's Series, Used, Undivided Back.

Here is an elaborate display of mineral samples in natural and polished shapes. We can also see window cases of silver and lead ores from the province of British Columbia and from across Canada.



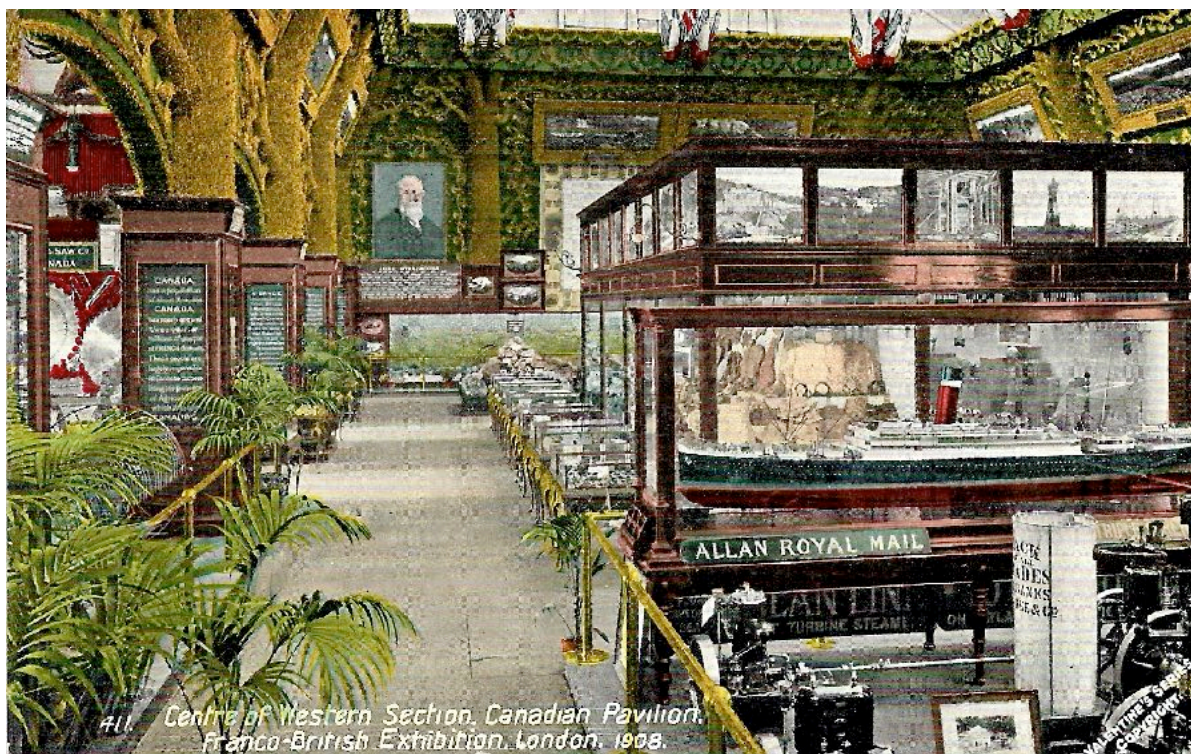
Canadian Pavilion, The Minerals, Card #321, Valentine's Series, Unused, Undivided Back.

Partial view of a diorama representing Canada Past and Present displaying the richness of western prairie lands and its wildlife. A referenced description of various parts of the display is seen at bottom.



Canada Past and Present, Valentine's Series, Unused, Undivided Back.

In the center of the Western section of the Pavilion, the Allan Royal Line promoted its services with models of steamers for travelling between Great Britain and Canada. A portrait of Lord Strathcona, businessman, philanthropist and Canadian High Commissioner to the U.K., appears on the back wall.



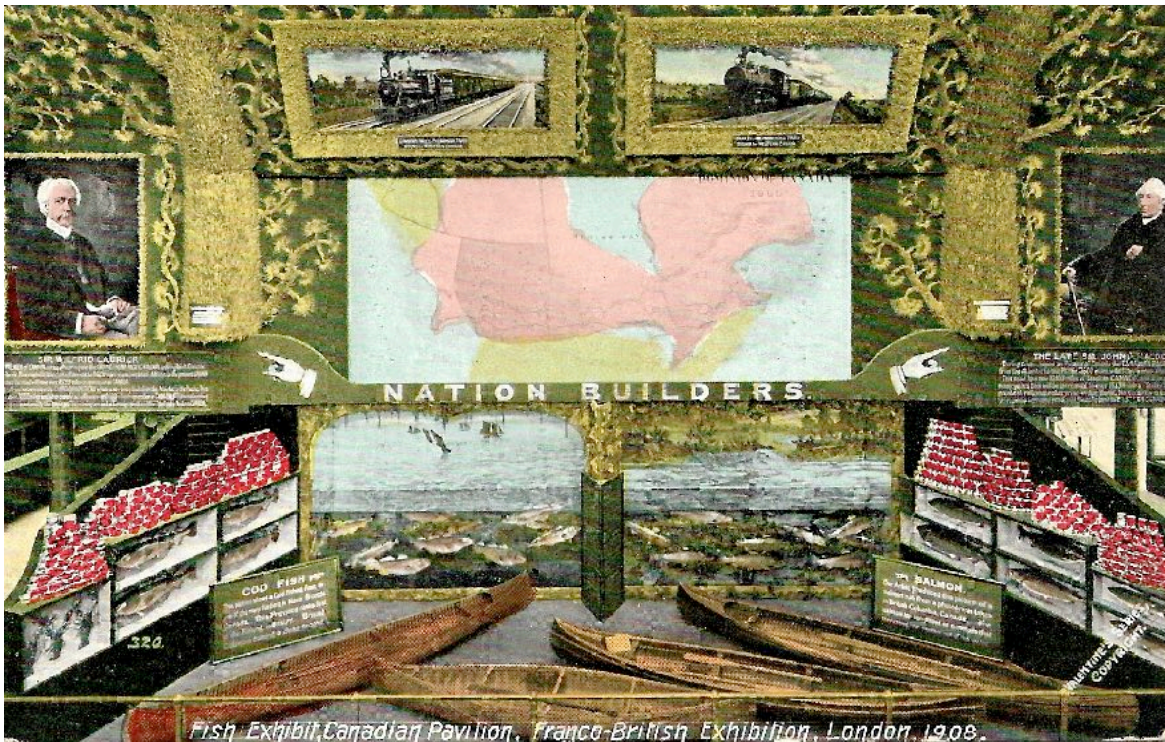
Centre of Western Section, Canadian Pavilion. Card #411, Valentine's Series, Unused, Undivided Back.

Another nearby section displays various means of transportation. On the back wall is a portrait of Lord Earl Grey, then Governor-General of Canada.



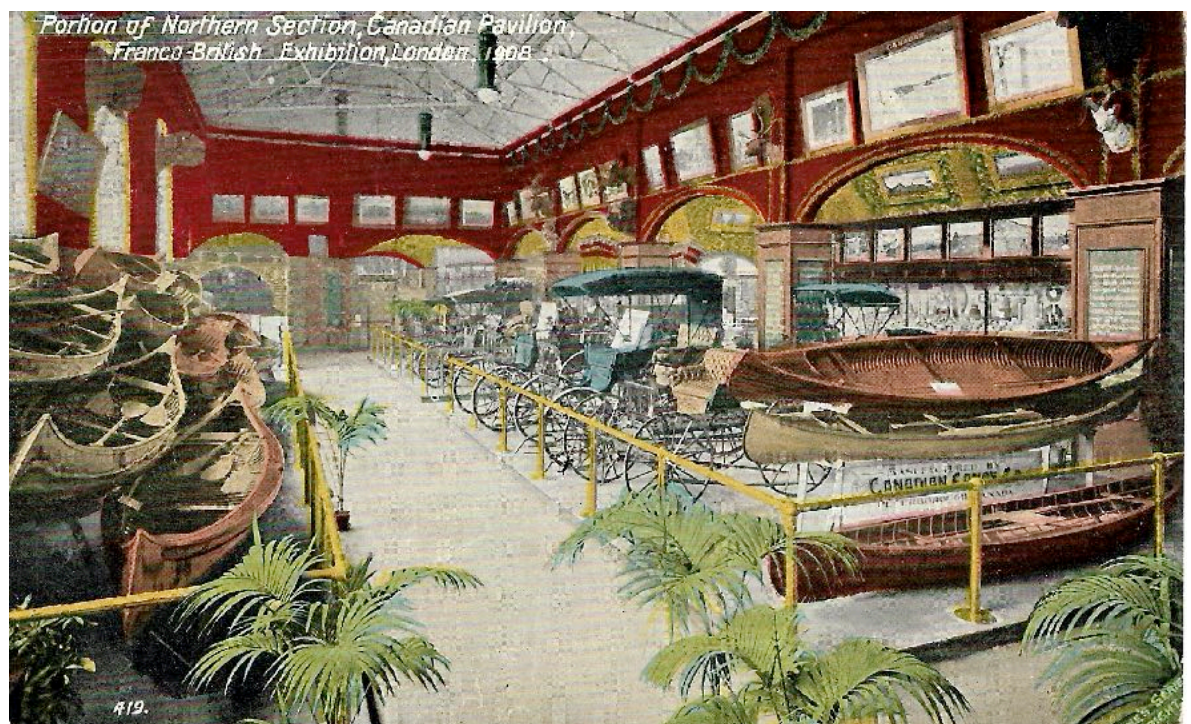
Northern Section, Canadian Pavilion, Card #412, Valentine's Series, Unused, Undivided Back.

Politicians such as Wilfrid Laurier and John A. MacDonald were given proper credit as Nation Builders in this exhibit featuring a 1900 version of the map of Canada. Natural resources of the country included codfish, salmon and shellfish, all very important export commodities.



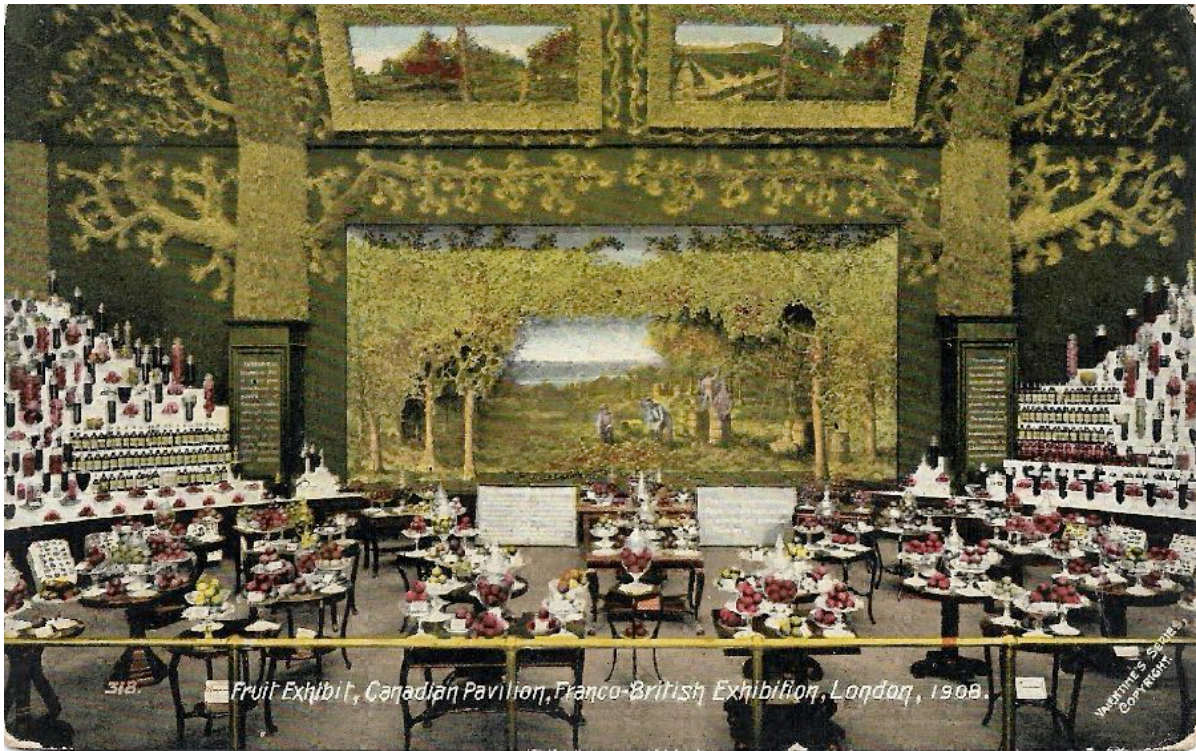
Fish Exhibit, Canadian Pavilion, Card #320, Valentine's Series, Unused, Undivided Back.

The various means of transportation in the vast Canadian landscape are also displayed here. The Canadian Canoe Co. of Peterborough Ontario was featured in this northern section.



Portion of Northern Section, Canadian Pavilion, Card #419, Valentine's Series, Used, Undivided Back.

A mouth-watering display of fresh fruits and by-products from the bountiful land of orchards as depicted by accompanying murals.



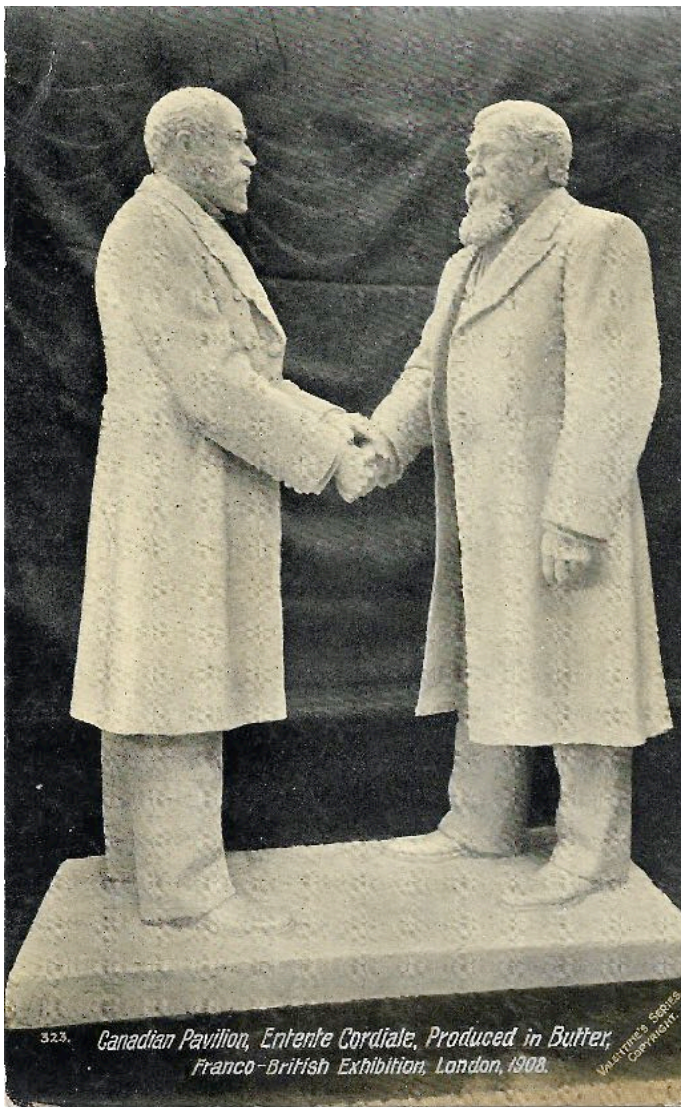
Fruit Exhibit, Canadian Pavilion Card #318, Valentine's Series, Unused, Undivided Back.

Combining natural products and handcrafting, this exhibit showed the plentiful resource that was milk and its by-product, butter.



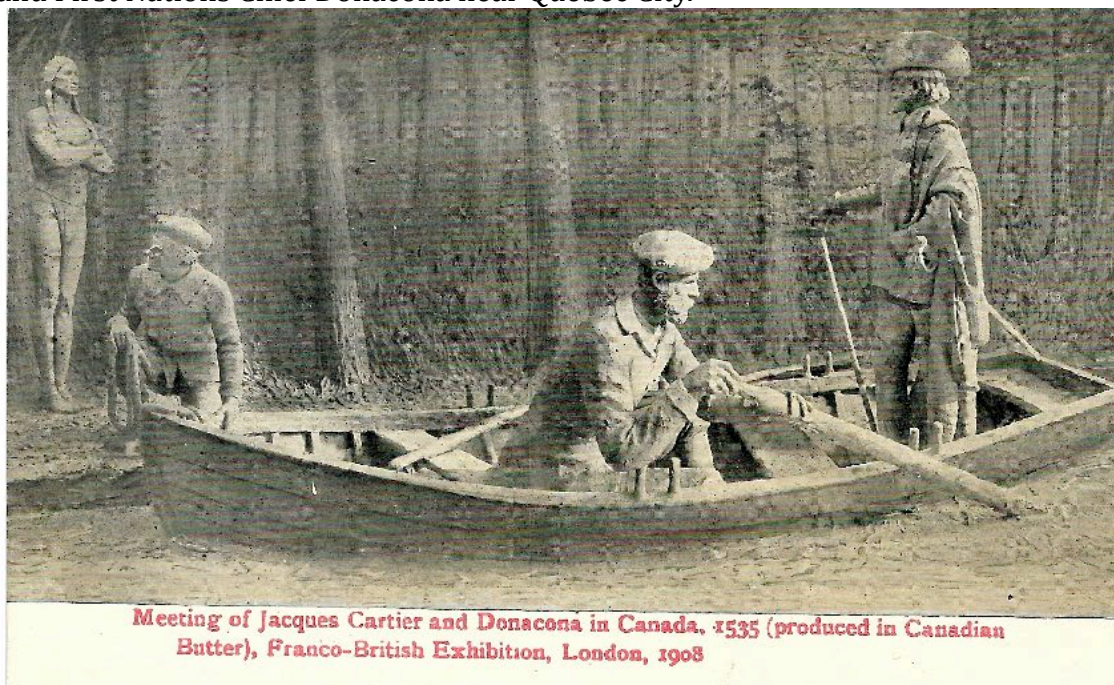
Butter Exhibit, Valentine & Sons Ltd., Unused, Undivided Back.

The ingenuity of Canadian manufacturing was also on display with this rendering of the Entente Cordiale between President Vallières of France and U.K.'s King Edward VII produced in butter.

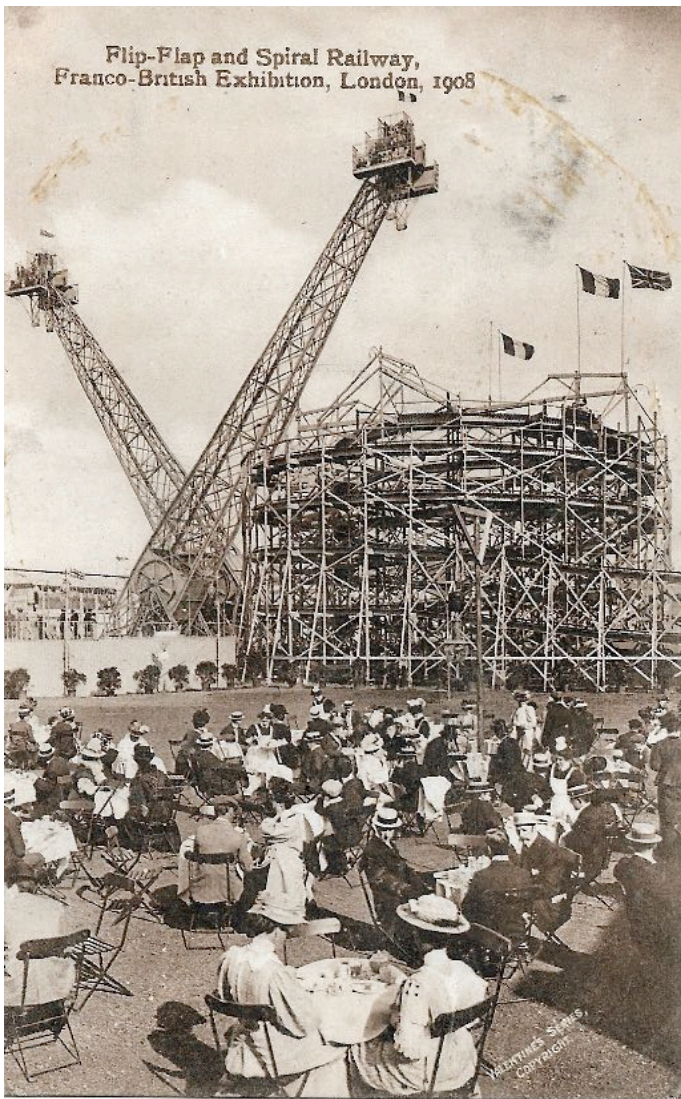


Canadian Pavilion, Entente Cordiale, Produced in Butter, Card #323, Valentine's Series, Used, Undivided Back.

Another fancy tableau in butter to commemorate the historical meeting between explorer Jacques Cartier and First Nations Chief Donacona near Quebec City.



Meeting of Jacques Cartier and Donacona in Canada, 1535 (produced in Canadian Butter), Valentine & Sons Ltd., Used, Undivided Back.



C - This exhibition offered a number of attractions to visitors. The Flip-Flap and the Spiral Railway both provided a thrilling ride and aerial view of the grounds.

Flip-Flap and Spiral Railway, Sepia Tone, RPPC, Valentine's Series, Official Post Card, Used, Divided back.

Given Canada's winter climate, this attraction recreated a comfortable sliding experience for the visitors at the Franco-British Exhibition. It was modeled after the Quebec City winter toboggan run installed across the famed Chateau Frontenac. It attracted 807 000 visitors.



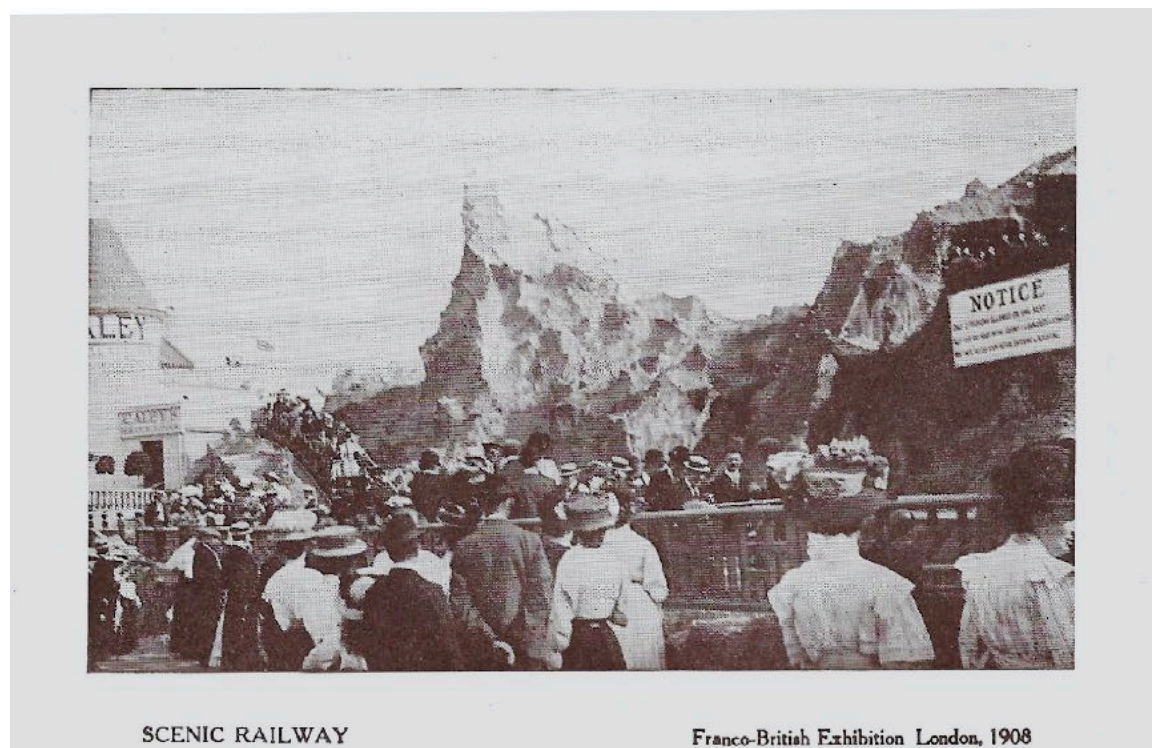
Canadian Toboggan, Card #301, Valentine's Series, Official Post Card, Used, Divided Back.

Among the major attractions at the Exhibition was this installation representing a scenic railway in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, the most popular of all attractions. The first view, from the back of the Canadian Pavilion, refers to the Great White City since the pavilions were all painted white.



View from Canadian Pavilion, The Great White City, Card #437, Valentine's Series, Used, Divided Back

This second view shows some of the crowds lined up for this popular ride.



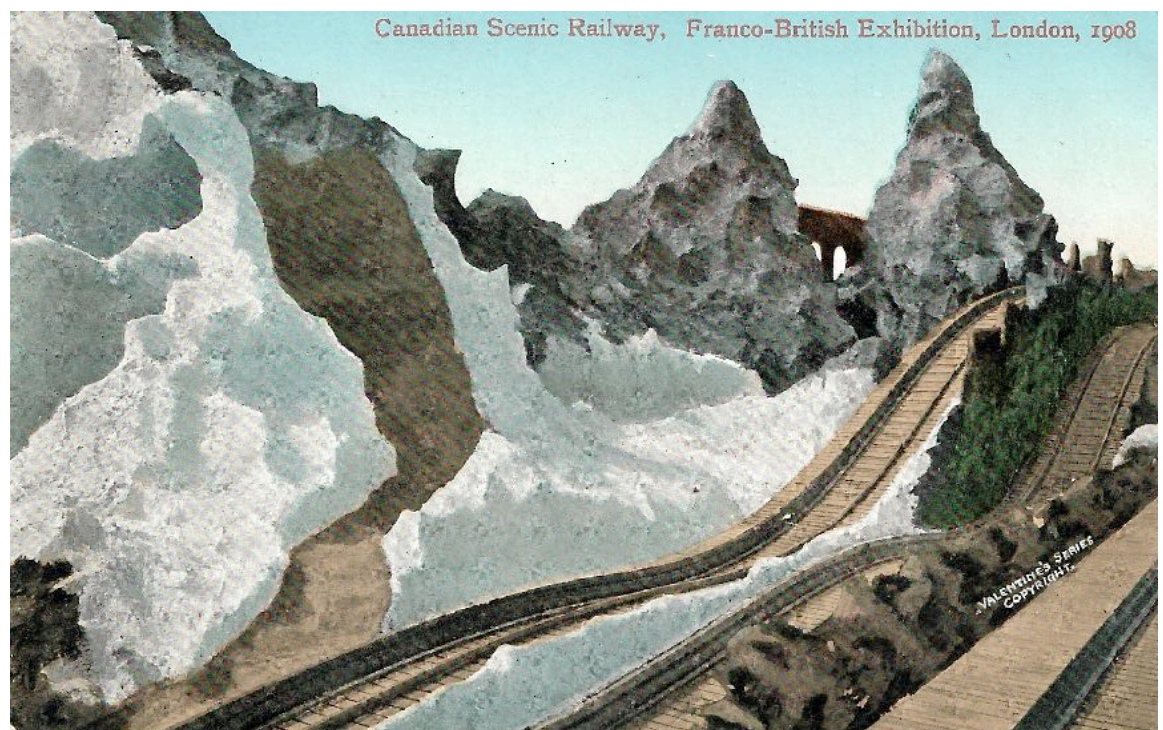
Scenic Railway, Bonnett & Shum (L.P.A.L.D.) London, Framed Black and White, Unused Post Card, Undivided Back.

The overall attendance for the Mountain Scenic Railway was 2 800 000 people, making it the most popular attraction on the grounds. The boulders and artificial snow made it look even more exotic. This first postcard published by E. Alexander, is a real photo postcard. These were produced in much smaller quantities than the Valentine's Series, the official Franco-British Exhibition post card, seen throughout this exhibit.



15
THE SCENIC RAILWAY
THE MOST POPULAR DIVERSION AT THE FRANCO BRITISH-EXHIBITION

The Scenic Railway / The Most Popular Diversion at the Franco British-Exhibition,
Real Photo, Card #15, EA Series, E. Alexander Ltd, London, printed in France, Unused,
Divided Back.



Canadian Scenic Railway, Official Post Card, Valentine's Series, Unused, Divided Back.

D - Aerial view of the White City Olympic stadium built adjacent to the Franco-British Exhibition grounds. This Olympic stadium included a running track, a banked cycling track and most unusually a swimming pool. The Games were officially opened by King Edward VII on July 13.



Stadium, Franco-British Exhibition, London, 1908

Stadium, Official Post Card by Valentine & Sons, Used, Divided Back.



The Stadium,
FRANCO-BRITISH EXHIBITION.

The Stadium, Real Photo Post Card, "National Series, No. S 194, published by Millar & Lang Ltd., Glasgow & London., Photo by Wakefield, Brantford and Chiswick, Unused, Divided Back

Due to the crowds visiting the Exhibition and its 68 000-seat capacity, attendance at the 1908 London Games surpassed the total attendance of all previous Olympic Games. The popularity of this great Canadian Pavilion and attractive installations could have previewed the coming success of Canadian athletes at those London Games.