

## Snowshoes for the Upper Crust

Magline of Canada Ltd. sells magnesium snowshoes to North American backpackers and the Canadian, British, Norwegian and U.S. Armies. It would like to sell them to the Chinese Army as well.

The big advantages of a magnesium shoe are its weight—it is light enough to be used as a two-handed tennis racket—and the fact that it does not pick up clumps of snow. Traditional wood and rawhide shoes do. Magline gets its magnesium right from a neighbourhood mine in Renfrew, Ontario, and the shoes are hand-strung with nylon-covered cable by 300 Algonquin Indians at two local reserves. The webbing was designed by Mary Commanda, an Algonquin,

using traditional tribal patterns. The U.S. Army got interested when it noticed how light-footed Canadian soldiers were. It recently bought 16,500 pairs.

The shoes have many other advantages. Rats don't eat them, they have turned-up tips which make it easier to walk on powder snow, they grip on ice, and they have a camber which gives a spring to the step and reduces the strain on the calves and lower back. A pair of them costs \$179.50. More information can be gotten by writing Magline of Canada Ltd., P.O. Box 219, Renfrew, Ontario K7V 4A3, to the attention of Andy Fraser, or call him at (613) 432-5848.

