



But two other recommendations the report made are beginning to take effect: one, "glassed-in arcades and underground shops". The subterranean warrens in downtown Montreal and the big shopping centres in the suburbs are concrete applications of these principles. Two, "commercial exploitation of the possibilities snow offers". Ski resorts and the skidoo industry are just that.

As to the final recommendation, "reduce direct costs by using waste heating and by more efficient snow-clearing", it is worth thinking about. Specifically, the report recommends studded tires for all vehicles, as has been adopted by most drivers in Finland. Cars no longer skid all over the place, gravel and salt are no longer needed and a thin layer of snow is allowed to remain on the road, minimising corrosion damage.

A final suggestion out of the report: Adapt our cars to the climate, give them front-wheel drive, bigger wheels, diesel power plants, maybe even a hovercraft-type air cushion. In the last case, we should no longer need highways at all, even in summer. Such economies!

One thing is sure, the final battle in our war against winter is yet to be fought. The difference between the snows of yesteryear and today's is that we pay in money where our grandfathers paid in sweat and man-hours.

It's remarkable that our history books scarcely mention this war. For three centuries, the colonial's life was an unrelenting hand-to-hand fight with the cold. This struggle against the frost that renders things iron-hard, against the ice that locks up water and land, against the snow that buries has been well described in a classic called *Man and Winter in Canada* written by a great geographer, Pierre Deffontaines.

Imagine a battalion of settlers disembarking under the torrid sun of our July, then later marvelling at the mildness of the fall and of an Indian summer reminiscent of August back home. Could they have been expected to foresee what was in store for them?

Without notice, they found themselves engulfed by one of the hardest winters on earth. Montreal is colder than Scandinavia. Even the coast of Norway doesn't get this icepack that