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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

August 12, 2005

The Editor  
Golden Star

Revelstoke MLA Norm Macdonald is just plain wrong when he accuses the government of breaking its promise to hire a conservation officer for the Golden area. (Re: Broken promise is wrong - Aug. 10).

The truth is we are working hard to find the best possible candidate to fill the position. In April 2005, the government held a competition for 15 conservation officer positions across the province. We were able to find 13 candidates who met the qualifications and physical requirements for the job. Unfortunately, we were unable to find a suitable candidate for the Golden position. I do not support sending unqualified conservation officers into the field.

But that does not mean we have stopped looking for the right people.

Our government is committed to increasing the number of conservation officers and park rangers across the province. We expect to hire approximately 50 over the next three years. Golden is one area we hope to have a conservation officer hired next year. For the upcoming season, the Conservation Officer Service will work hard to ensure the Golden area gets the coverage it needs.

Working as a conservation officer can be dangerous at times. It is vital officers have the necessary skills, qualifications and physical requirements to do the job well. It seems to me that Mr. Macdonald would rather us throw the job requirements out the window than to make sure the communities, wildlife and environment in the Golden area are properly protected over the long term.

Sincerely,

Barry Penner  
Minister of Environment