

Pot luck on Holberg road

The Insurance Corporation of B.C. is now adding insult to the injury inflicted by the B.C. Highways Department which earlier this year replaced the B.C. Forest Service in its traditional role of Chief Neglector of Public Responsibility for the Holberg Road.

ICBC has written a Holberg resident telling him he is to lose his safe driver discount of \$58 for this year, not because he had an accident, but because a rock in a huge pothole in the Holberg road damaged his vehicle.

As Holberg regional director Fred Mantic put it, "This means the rock which came up didn't cause the accident, the driver did."

According to ICBC regulations, if a rock rolled down a mountain and struck a passing car the driver would be labelled unsafe and the safe driver discount would be lost.

Reasoning like that is purely and simply ridiculous. When applied to a stretch of road in as dangerous a condition and as badly maintained as is the highway's department section of the Holberg Road it is bordering on the criminal.

Highways department officials say we

should stop worrying about the Holberg road because the weather is cold now and the road will be in good shape until Spring with a nice firm snow pack along most of its length. OK until Spring thaw and then there'll be more vehicles smashed up by the dreadful condition of the road and more citizens will lose their safe driver discounts as axles break, wheels fall off and springs snap.

At the Holberg end of the road, private industry in the form of Rayonier manages to keep the section of the road for which it is responsible in reasonable and safe condition, year in and year out. It is only the taxpayers' section which is constantly neglected.

Never mind the winter lull. The highways department should get going right now, immediately, on setting up director Mantic's suggestion for a proper private contract to grade the road adequately on an annual basis until such time as it is paved or replaced by the Holberg Inlet sea level route.

Maybe if the B.C. government made a start today, the bureaucrats in Victoria could have the preliminary paperwork almost completed by Spring.