

1 at what the duties of the regulators and what they did
2 pursuant to those duties.

3 From the perspective of the United Steelworkers of
4 America, the most striking and most troubling feature of
5 the evidence is the picture drawn of this failure by the
6 regulatory system to work. And it was not an abstract
7 problem for the people who worked in the mine because, in
8 a very real way, they depended on the regulators, the
9 inspectors and the government mining engineers. At the
10 time they had no union; they had no functioning health
11 and safety committee. Their boss, the underground
12 manager, was not the kind of person they could turn to
13 for assurance or support.

14 The failure of the regulators to place effective
15 constraints on the operators of the Westray mine left the
16 mine employees without any protection from an employer
17 that did not place a priority on safety.

18 Mr. Commissioner, this regulatory vacuum did not
19 arise by accident. It was created by politicians who
20 valued economic growth over occupational safety and by
21 bureaucrats who deferred to the mine operators at almost
22 every opportunity.

23 There can be no doubt from the evidence that the
24 Westray Mine project enjoyed a special place in the
25 hearts and minds of Nova Scotia's political leaders and