

1 I want to turn, Mr. Commissioner, now to evidence  
2 concerning my clients, the employees of the Westray mine.

3 And on one point there should be no doubt the  
4 employees of Westray Coal wanted the mine to succeed and  
5 they did their best to see that that happened. For many,  
6 this was the first chance they had to work at a good  
7 paying job close to home. The promise was 15 years of  
8 employment with a young, forward-looking company.

9 Now the reality of Westray, as they soon learned,  
10 was quite different. Their bosses were more concerned  
11 with production than safety and turned out not to be  
12 competent to run a modern underground coal mine. They  
13 worked in an atmosphere of intimidation, were subjected  
14 to abuse from the underground manager, and were  
15 threatened with their jobs if they complained about  
16 working conditions.

17 When the miners testified here about conditions  
18 underground, there were suggestions, Mr. Commissioner,  
19 that they were exaggerating, that it couldn't have been  
20 that bad, and that you were getting a distorted picture  
21 of life in that mine.

22 After 76 days of evidence, we submit the testimony  
23 of the miners has not been contradicted on any  
24 significant point. In fact, their description of working  
25 conditions in the mine has been corroborated by their