



—Drew Gragg, Citizen

Carmen Santos of El Salvador waits in trailer for his turn with immigration officers

Refugee

From page A1 story:
**Last minute refugee claims
jam Canadian border post**

ject the application, the claimant will be deported.

Many of the claimants in Blackpool said they have been told by friends and advisers that if they make claims before Sunday, they will be able to enter Canada under the old rules.

Under the old law, the refugee claimant is examined by an immigration officer, then appears before a panel to make a sworn statement — after which he's allowed into the country.

Then a board makes a final decision on his claim but the process takes up to five years.

The claimants interviewed by the *Citizen* said they are genuine refugees fleeing persecution or life-threatening situations.

And they say if Ottawa rejects their claims under the new law they will certainly be sent back home by the U.S. authorities. These claimants are all in the U.S. on visitors' permits.

Carmen Santos, 22, arrived in Blackpool from Florida, where he

has been living for the past two months.

He said he fled his native El Salvador because his life was threatened both by the army and the insurgents fighting the government.

Both had tried to recruit him to fight but he says he "did not want to die." He sees Canada as his only hope for a new life.

Another claimant who gave her name as Cecilia also said she was counting on the compassion of Canada to give her a chance to make a new life with her husband.

She claims her life and that of her husband will be in danger if they are returned to a South American country she refused to name.