

**Bill C-4 Key Quotes from the House of Commons  
October 3, 2011**

Full text of Hansard:

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**Hon. Jason Kenney (Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, CPC)**

She [Jean Crowder, NDP] also mentions the **charter. All it requires is that an oral hearing on credibility be granted before a decision-maker by the asylum claimant**, which in the bill is a right that would be afforded to all, even to smuggled migrants.

Finally, **it does nothing to violate the refugee convention because it fully respects our obligations of non-refoulement under the convention**. We would not return anyone who has been deemed by our legal system to face danger or persecution.

**Friends in the opposition say that there is no immigration queue. That is not true.** The member just pointed out the fact that millions of people are waiting patiently for resettlement opportunities, who are designated convention refugees that at UNHCR camps around the world, some 12,000 of whom we accept.

The member has said that we are getting 11,000 refugee claimants per year. That is not so. **Last year we got about 29,000 asylum claimants. Two years ago it was 38,000 asylum claimants. We are always in the top three industrialized countries in terms of the number of asylum claims filed, about 62% of which are determined to be unfounded.**

He spoke at length about the detention of illegal immigrants under the bill. He suggested that it was a violation of rights to have immigration-related detentions. **Having the option to detain illegal immigrants has always been an aspect of Canada's immigration law.** I must say that the proposed measures in Bill C-4 are far more modest than the current practices, the real practices, applied in the vast majority of the western democracies. I note for example the United Kingdom, France and other western European countries. The European Union requires almost all asylum seekers to be detained until the determination of their status. The same goes for Australia and the United States. All these countries are acting in accordance with international conventions on human rights that recognize that it is a right, a responsibility of the state, to regulate immigration in a legal and normal fashion.

In closing, I must point out that **under the new asylum system, which will come into force next June, asylum seekers will be granted refugee status within three months, the same length of time as those who arrived as part of a human smuggling operation will be released from detention.** It is not necessarily a one-year time frame for true refugees. They would be released from detention within three months.

[...] **the vast majority of the democracies in the European Union, which are signatories to the UN conventions on refugees and European conventions on human rights, keep asylum seekers in detention until their status is established.** The process is often much longer than the 12-month maximum proposed by this bill.

**Why is it a violation for Canada to place illegal immigrants in detention in certain limited cases when it is quite all right for all other democracies to use the same tool?**

**Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Western Economic Diversification), CPC)**

**Our resettlement program is one of the most generous ones in the developed world.** Each year we resettle 10,000-12,000 refugees through government assisted privately sponsored refugee programs. Globally, countries with resettlement programs resettle about 100,000 refugees, which means we take one out of every ten refugees resettled. These refugees often spend many years, sometimes decades, in squalid refugee camps or urban slums.

**To suggest that we are not being generous with our immigration and our refugee system is false and very misleading.** We are trying to ensure there are no queue jumpers.

**Mr. Harold Albrecht (Kitchener—Conestoga, CPC)**

Mr. Speaker, a couple of times today there has been the innuendo that somehow we are cutting back on the number of asylum seekers and refugees that we accept. I want to remind Canadians who are watching that **the Balanced Refugee Reform Act that was passed recently adds 20% or 2,500 refugees per year, so we are up to 14,500 refugees per year that we are accepting.**

This government is standing up for refugees. We want refugees to be welcomed into this country, but we want to be sure that the refugees, the asylum seekers we are accepting are actually refugees. **What is so wrong with having public safety officials determine that the people who are seeking refugee here are in fact legitimate refugees?**