

## Trade deals and the public

### To the Editor,

'Free Trade' has such a nice ring to it. Easy to sell anything that's free, right? Well most people have by now come to realize that there is zip free stuff in the actual documents, instead there are clauses which allow big pharma to hike their profits at our expense, and for large corporations to control more of our vital resources than they already do. A more accurate name would be 'investor rights guarantee agreement.' But hey, can't be too honest when selling snake oil.

Last week French Green MEP and renowned anti-globalization activist José Bové was detained by Canadian border officials when he arrived in Montreal to speak against CETA. He was eventually allowed into the country, but his detention prevented him speaking at the event. It seems that for the architects of trade deals freedom of movement for goods and services comes ahead of freedom of expression.

A piece from Mark Gollom: 'Wallonia, a francophone region with a population of 3.5 million, has been the lone holdout over the approval of the trade pact. Local politicians have argued that the proposed deal would undermine labour, environment and consumer standards and allow multinationals to crush local companies.' Sounds about right. What else would you expect from a deal put together by corporate lawyers and lobbyists? No one at the table represented Joe Public, the environment, health care workers or the myriad groups who make up the struggle to earn a living and actually pay taxes, forced or not.

Even our politicians were not allowed to see the details until it was finished.

In Hastings we used to have companies making shoes and shirts and other manufactured goods. We still buy these things but they are made over there some where. CETA is only one of the waves. The TPP is also in the pipe. Time is short for raising your voice.

*Paul Whittaker, Gilmour*