

FROM THE "Did You Know?" E-MAIL SERIES PROVIDED BY THE NOVA SCOTIA UNION OF PUBLIC & PRIVATE EMPLOYEES

Contract Breakthrough

Employees now receive sick leave for their first day off sick instead of only for their second day and thereafter. And now they can take their vacation leave one day at a time instead of just in week-long chunks.

Those are just a few of the breakthroughs in the first contract negotiated by the Airport Hotel Halifax workers since they joined NSUPE. The Local 17 membership voted 100% in favour of acceptance. Rights and benefits many NSUPE members take for granted are still mere wishes for most hotel workers, even those who are unionized. But inroads are being made, one step at a time.

Under the new contract, Local 17 members will be given six days of paid leave (pro-rated for part-timers) at the beginning of each year that they can use for sick leave, bereavement leave, emergency leave, medical appointments, etc. For each quarter year in which the employee has perfect attendance, she/he will receive an additional day of leave so that the employee could have up to 10 days of paid leave per year. At the end of the year, any leave days that the employee has left will be paid out.

Other improvements include that employees on call are only required to contact their supervisor once during their designated call in time and that employees won't be required to work more than one split shift in a row unless the employer has no scheduling alternative.

The new contract included 2.5% increases retroactive to October 1, 2004 plus significant wage adjustments for some classifications. The new wages range from \$8.84 an hour for restaurant workers and lounge workers up to \$11.32 for a night auditor. Housekeepers earn \$9.82 an hour and maintenance workers receive \$11.04 per hour. The workers also received bonuses based on length of service of up to \$2,200.

The contract ends in September 2006...and then NSUPE negotiators will be back looking for bigger inroads.

NOTE: *The "Did You Know?" series is general information only. For advice specific to your workplace or personal circumstances, please contact a union representative. Comments are welcome at nsupe@ns.sympatico.ca.*