



Speech by

PHIL REEVES

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

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YOUTH ALLOWANCE

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (10.28 a.m.): I want to talk about a young man, 18 years of age, named Brett from my electorate. Brett left school less than a year ago and has worked most of the time since he left school. Unfortunately, Brett was retrenched about eight weeks ago. At the time he was living with, and paying board to, his father. His mother has left Queensland and he is unsure of her whereabouts. Things had become very tense at home. His father, who is also supporting a number of younger children, could not afford to support Brett. Brett had to leave home. It was becoming too hostile at home and, secondly, his father could not continue to support him.

Brett's girlfriend is expecting a baby. Brett's predicament is that he is 18, trying to do the right thing and support his girlfriend, but he has been put in an impossible situation. They are paying \$200 per fortnight for a rented caravan but are receiving only \$240 per fortnight from his girlfriend's youth allowance.

Brett's car has run out of registration, but he cannot afford to renew it, because owing to unjust criteria of the coalition Federal Government's Youth Allowance he is not eligible to receive it. He cannot go home. His father is not prepared to support him. He is trying to do the right thing, support his girlfriend and find a job. Recently, he rode a pushbike from Eight Mile Plains to Browns Plains only to be told when he got there that the employer did not want him because the company could not afford him. He and his girlfriend are expected to live on \$40 a fortnight. The strange thing is that once the baby is born, he is eligible for assistance; but while she needs a lot of support during her pregnancy, they can have only \$20 per week for food. The way that genuine young people are being treated by this callous Federal Government is shameful. The unfortunate part about Brett's story is that he is not alone. It is about time that those opposite convinced their Federal colleagues to have a bit of heart.
