

Helicopter hunting ban about 'fairness'

is running out for
 rs who want to
 e game animals by
 pter on the South
 's conservation
 3. Planned
 tion is likely to end
 ctive known as
 hunting" by
 ary. **Mark Price**
 is.



High life . . . Tahr living in the South Canterbury high country are likely to be living a quieter life once heli-hunting is banned.
 PHOTO: STEPHEN JAQUERY

hopes to have new
 tion in place to prohibit
 ctive on public lands,
 gh not on private land.
 press towards the pro-
 n has been held up by a
 ourt case taken against
 inister of Conservation
 companies — Back
 y Helicopters, Alpine
 roun, Mount Hutt Hel-
 tures, Alpine Hunting
 ain Hunting and South
 2 Safaris.

tr application for a
 r review was dismissed
 stice Stephen Kos this
 and Mr Dunne's office
 le *Otago Daily Times* he
 determined to push
 with legislation that
 end the practice on the
 vation estate.
 spokesman said the
 over heli-hunting was

Eradication not policy

ASSOCIATE Conservation
 Minister Peter Dunne does
 not regard heli-hunting in
 the conservation estate as a
 major part of controlling
 introduced animals.
 Asked why Mr Dunne was
 planning to introduce legis-
 lation ending heli-hunting
 of tahr and chamois —
 which are regarded as pests
 — a spokesman for Mr
 Dunne said the Department
 of Conservation was "mov-
 ing away" from a policy of
 eradication towards man-
 agement and control.
 "Heli-hunting is not
 really a major part of that
 side of things."

According to a High Court
 decision released by Justice
 Stephen Kos this month,
 there were 13 "active"
 shooting and herding.
 Hazing was where a heli-
 copter chased a game animal
 "potentially to the point of
 exhaustion". However, he
 noted operators were ada-
 mant this was not a practice
 they undertook and it was
 banned both under the indus-
 try code of practice and their
 Doc concessions.

Aerial shooting was pro-
 hibited under concessions
 and the industry's code of
 practice also did not condone
 aerial shooting "except where
 a wounded animal needs to be
 dispatched humanely".
 "Herding" was undertaken
 by operators, who described it
 as "forward to herding a mob

"Rather the trophy is
 located by the helicopter,
 which then backs off and
 hovers about 30 to 50m above,
 and 15m behind, the trophy."
 "The animal then moves
 away from the helicopter, and
 if all goes according to plan,
 heads towards the client, who
 has already been dropped off
 by the helicopter and is
 positioned on the ground."
 The industry code of prac-
 tice required herding be done
 "in a manner that does not
 place the animal under
 adverse duress", Justice Kos
 said.
 The case being considered
 by Justice Kos was over the
 length of heli-hunting conces-

The six companies have
 been operating, under two-
 year Doc concessions — which
 run out in February — but
 have been arguing for 10-year
 concessions.

They suggested Mr Dunne
 was "biased" against heli-
 hunting.
 In his judgement, Justice
 Kos recognised the "trench-
 ant" views on both sides but
 found no illegality by Mr
 Dunne or that his trenchant
 views made his decision
 biased.

He considered Mr Dunne
 had approached the question
 of concessions with an open
 mind.
 "The record here shows that
 the associate minister in fact
 did so, granting the conces-
 sions and significantly water-
 ing down his previous stance
 on the practice of herding."

Dunedin lawyer Colin With-
 nall QC said the heli-hunting
 interests he represented in
 the case had 20 working days
 to decide whether to appeal
 and that was being consid-
 ered.

He questioned what it was
 that Mr Dunne proposed ban-
 ning given that aerial shooting
 and hazing were not carried
 out by heli-hunting operators
 under existing concessions
 and the minister had allowed
 a "very low level" of herding.
 "We don't need legislation
 to ban that, primarily
 because it doesn't happen
 anyway, and secondarily,
 because it can be done by
 way of conditions on conces-
 sions."
 Mr Dunne's spokesman
 said the new legislation
 would not affect helicopter
 venison recovery.