Liquor Bootlegging Alarms Kotzebue Folks

One of the most pressing problems facing the city of Kotzebue is that of enforcement of the city and state laws.

This was revealed at the city council's first meeting of the year, when a group of concerned townspeople confronted city and police officials with the situation.

The charge was met with counter charges from officials. State Trooper Bob Boatright stated that he and City Policeman Bill Stevens were aware of the situation, but were helpless due to lack of local support.

"You people have to file the complaints before we can act," he continued.

"I have been after the police since last summer," one woman responded.

Several other townspeople said that they have also attempted to make complaints before without success. Another man tried to file a complaint during the meeting, then was halted by City Police Commissioner Elmer Armstrong who stated, "I will not have anyone make a complaint during this meeting."

The problem revolves around enforcement of city ordinances, as well as state law backing Kotzebue's dry status.

At one time, the city had operated a liquor store which had been a source of much of its revenues. Since then, however, the town has voted itself dry.

Presently there is a sizable bootlegging operation which has provided serious problems for the community. The entire population admits awareness of the situation.

In a survey of several airline employees, it was discovered that one prominent bootlegger re-

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ceives an average of six cases of whiskey shipments per week.

The bootlegger, of which there are three in Kotzebue, will pay $5.00 for each bottle in Nome and sell them for $20.00 in Kotzebue, for a profit of $180.00 per case.

The townspeople met following the meeting and agreed to organize and work to resolve some of the problems which the community faces.

Much of the legal procedure involved was explained to the group, first in English and then translated into Eskimo.