

# Village Liquor Retail

Alaska's small cities are seeking the right to operate their own retail liquor stores. So far, the House Local Government Committee has not taken action on the bill to authorize this.

A bill sponsored by Rep. Frank Ferguson (D-Kotzebue) would allow cities with a population of fewer than 3500 residents to obtain retail liquor licenses if their voters approve.

Barrow is a mainstay of the bootleggers. Barrow residents spend some \$500,000 per year for liquor, according to Jack Chenoweth, city manager of Barrow.

Because Barrow is dry now, Chenoweth testified to the House committee, "People go to the Post Office, write out a money order, send it down to Fairbanks

and have the liquor air-freighted back. It all seems to arrive in Barrow at the same time and results in some pretty bad situations."

Ferguson estimated that in his area, bootleg booze sells for \$20 per bottle, as high as \$60 in the summer.

In Barrow, residents voted in 1969 to go wet. They expected the control board to grant the city a license, but the board has refused. Kotzebue and Bethel already have licenses.

If licenses in Barrow were issued to private individuals, said the city manager, the city could expect to realize only about \$15,000 per year from its 3 per cent sales tax. A city retail store could bring the city \$140,000 per year.