

Number of Districts Minor Point

No Problems Seen in

By John E. Simonds
Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON — Micronesian status officials, who seem to have accomplished more in their informal negotiations with Micronesian leaders than in the full-dress talks at the long table, see only minor hurdles remaining in the path toward a formal "Free Association" compact between the U.S. and the Trust Territory of the Pacific.

The draft compact released here and in Saipan last week does not yet bear the signatures of its authors, but it amounts to an agreement reached

last month in Guam by the principal negotiators — U.S. Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams; his deputy, James M. Wilson Jr.; and the co-chairmen of the Micronesian team, Sen. Lazarus Salii of Palau and Rep. Ekpap Silk of the Marshall Islands.

THE MEETINGS in

Guam and a session earlier this year in Carmel, Calif., accounted for much of the progress that has been made in bringing the U.S. and Trust Territory representatives closer to terms of agreement after the abrupt dissolution last November of the seventh round of formal status talks here at the Interior Department.

The release of the draft agreement was timed to coincide with a meeting of the Micronesian Congress in Saipan, so that members of that body would be among the first to review it.

Aside from some problems in wording, most of the differences have been resolved, according to U.S. officials here.

