

Tape Gap Report

New York.

The final draft of a report on the 18½-minute gap in a Watergate tape still concludes that the lapse was caused by numerous erasures and re-recordings, an assistant to a member of the panel of experts said yesterday.

After a six-month investigation, the six-member panel of experts turned in its final draft report to U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica Saturday.

The results were not made public.

However, Ernest Aschkenasy, an assistant to Mark Weiss, vice president of Federal Scientific Corp., said in an interview that the final

draft is substantially the same as the preliminary report to Sirica in January.

That report said a buzzing that replaced conversation was "put on the tape in the process of erasing and re-recording at least five, and perhaps as many as nine, separate and contiguous segments." It said magnetic signatures on the tape "show conclusively that the 18.5-minute section could not have been produced by any single continuous operation."

Aschkenasy, who said he participated in the technical examination of the tape, said the final draft does not alter that finding.

Associated Press