An Adapted Version
of
REMOTE ISLAND

A SIMULATED LEARNING SITUATION DESIGNED FOR
UPPER LEVEL EDUCABLE MENTAL RETARDATES
OR STUDENTS WITH MINOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

Adapted by Richard B. Cohen

RATIONALE

Teaching map symbols to pupils in the classroom, even a learning disability or educable mentally retarded classroom, is usually considered one of the easiest lessons to "get across." Teachers usually have children come to the map at the front of the room to point out such things as rivers, oceans, states, capitols, mountains and valleys. These factual components of learning are readily memorized and, therefore, usually viewed with some enthusiasm by both the teacher and the pupils. They represent less abstractness in social studies than the study of a man's life, or the course of events in a war, battle or peace conference. In a sense, a pupil can "see" the facts.

Perhaps this is why most teachers do little more with the teaching of map skills than fill out dittoed worksheets or construct salt and flour maps. Too, it is often felt that there simply isn't time in the curricula to spend studying map symbols as a separate unit. Consequently, map symbols are taught by the teacher whenever he "feels" that the time is appropriate for a greater understanding of the lesson at hand. This, for the most part, represents an "addition" to a regular lesson.

Teaching map symbols in this manner does not necessarily insure a transfer to application learning. For this reason, REMOTE ISLAND attempts to use the symbols as they are learned in a simulated condition of problem solving. It is known that learning the application of knowledge at

the same time that knowledge is presented allows the pupil to internalize the learning in usable form. Decision making, based upon the presented knowledge, enhances this mode of learning even more. The pupil is allowed to use the knowledge in his own way as he chooses a path through the decision making process.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SIMULATED EVENT

REMOTE ISLAND concerns a hypothetical island which the United States gained from Japan after World War II. It has remained virtually uninhabited since the time of its' discovery by the crew of a shipwrecked sailing vessel. Pupils who take part in the simulation are asked first to apply these learnings to a problem that confronts the people of the island. All pupils participate in the learning and problem solving by contributing different information concerning the island. Each child is assigned a role to play. The members of each simulation group decide, by consensus, what to do about the problems facing the island.

MATERIALS AND STEPS IN IMPLEMENTING THE SIMULATION

The simulation is implemented by dividing the class into groups of five persons each. A sociogram lends itself well to this grouping. Groups represent inhabitants of the island. A transparency for each physical characteristic of the island will be shown on an overhead projector. Each member will have a role card telling him what person he is to represent on the island. He will also have a worksheet on which he records the data about the island in the form of physical characteristics and questions to be answered. (See Appendix for these materials.)

The simulation starts with the group compiling factual knowledge about the island. This is accomplished by the instructor showing transparencies to the entire class (transparencies represent rainfall, temperature, locations of streams, etc.). As each transparency is shown, the group members record this data on their outline maps on their worksheets. Colored pencils should be used to duplicate the same colors presented on the transparencies. Each member of the groups now has the same information.

The second part of the simulation has to do with placing three large cities, any number of small cities that the group desires, and appropriate roads and railroads on this map. Symbols to be used for these physical features are included in the worksheet. The group is encouraged to discuss where to place these additions and arrive at a consensus before placing them on the map. Discussing reasons for completing these placements are important to each member of the group and his understanding as the simulation progresses.

The third part of the game starts with the problem that is given in the worksheet. A wealthy man wants to start a fish processing plant. This event can cause many things to happen to the people located there. It also can represent added jobs and income to the people of the island and the people that are not good. From the processing of the fish smog can be generated, streams and the ocean itself can be polluted. All aspects for the new plant should be considered by the group. To do this, every member uses his card which defines his role on the island. Maximum time should be allowed for the discussion until a group decision is reached and the reasons are clearly set down for the decisions that are made.

At the end of this discussion, groups then report to the class-at-large on the decisions and the reasons behind them.

INTENDED LEARNINGS FROM THE SIMULATION

Map Symbols: Placing

Pupils learn the meaning of map symbols at the same time they learn to use them. The symbols appear on the map as having relations to each other, i.e., the ground cover is greener where there is more rainfall, foliage is less on mountain tops, and lakes occur in valleys and plains. The pupil will locate cities, highways and railroads, using designated symbols, with group approval.

Map Symbols: Using to Make Decisions

To make intelligent decisions about the problems of locating geographical areas which include cities, towns, railroads, and rivers certain kinds of knowledge and understandings are necessary. Map symbols for this simulation represent a part of this body of knowledge.

Social Structure and Its Relation to Decision Making

The group, through its role playing cards, is led to see that different people in the community have their individual views about what a processing plant means to them. Differences in opinions and impasses have to be broken for consensus in the group.

Group Process: Group Decision Making

The group learns to make a decision solely on the data at hand. This makes the process independent of the teacher and thereby strengthens the independency of the group and the individual. In addition to knowledge, skills of persuasion, negotiation, compromise, leadership, followship, blocking and facilitating are experienced.

APPENDIX A

REMOTE ISLAND

Worksheet (Adapted Version)

NAME_____ DATE_____ GROUP NUMBER_____

DIRECTIONS: This is a fact learning and decision making game about an imaginary island called REMOTE ISLAND. Please do the tasks in this order: 1. read the history about the island, 2. each person in the group observe the instructor showing transparencies of different features of the island· each member copy in colored pencils these symbols on the map on page five of this worksheet, 3. by discussing in the group, place the three large cities and as many small cities as you desire on the map; in addition, place highways and railroads, 4. now read the problem concerning Mr. Waters and make a decision about the processing plant; record in writing all reasons as to why you decided as you did.

HISTORY OF REMOTE ISLAND

About 1750 a frigate was wrecked and sank off the coast of REMOTE ISLAND (so named by the crew of this ship). Some of the men were able to make the shore of this island, some died in the sea. As the island was out of the traveled path of ocean vessels, it was forty-three years before the last two remaining men were rescued. Although the island was lush and inhabitable, after being rescued, these two men soon forgot about it. Japan claimed it as a submarine fueling station during World War II.

United States obtained the island in a trade with Japan in 1950. The United States government later sold it to Americans at $1500.00 per acre with a maximum of five acres that could be purchased by any one person. No companies could buy the land.

By 1970 the population of the island was 700,000 and growing at the rate of 10,000 per year.

The island is beautiful and peaceful. It is still out of the main ocean traveled routes of ships. However, lately a problem has become evident. The island is running out of money because the people on the island import more than they export. In other words, more money is leaving the island than is coming in. The people are concerned about this.

One day, a man by the name of Mr. Waters came to the island from the United States and made an offer to the people that would add more jobs and income to the people of the island. He states that he will preserve and can fish and export it to other countries. This will be done by setting up fish nets all along the island to catch the fish.

PROBLEM I

(After you have completed putting all the symbols on your own map.) Locate on your map three large cities and as many small cities as the group desires. Put in the appropriate highways and railroads.

These questions may help guide you in this task:

1. What geographical factors are best to consider when locating a city?
2. What economic conditions cause cities to start and prosper?

QUESTIONS

1. Why did you locate your cities where you did? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Why did you locate your railroads and highways where you did? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PROBLEM 2

Around REMOTE ISLAND the fishing is considered good and this has never been a problem to the local fisherman. This is also the same area that Mr. Waters wants to set up his nets. The problem is that Mr. Waters might interfere with the local fishermen. What arrangements could be made to prevent anything from happening between them?

These questions may guide you in this task:

1. What could happen to the island if Mr. Waters set up his nets and he left no room for the local fishermen.
2. If the island continued as such and did not let Mr. Waters set up his processing plant, what could happen.
3. What kinds of solutions do you see that could be considered.

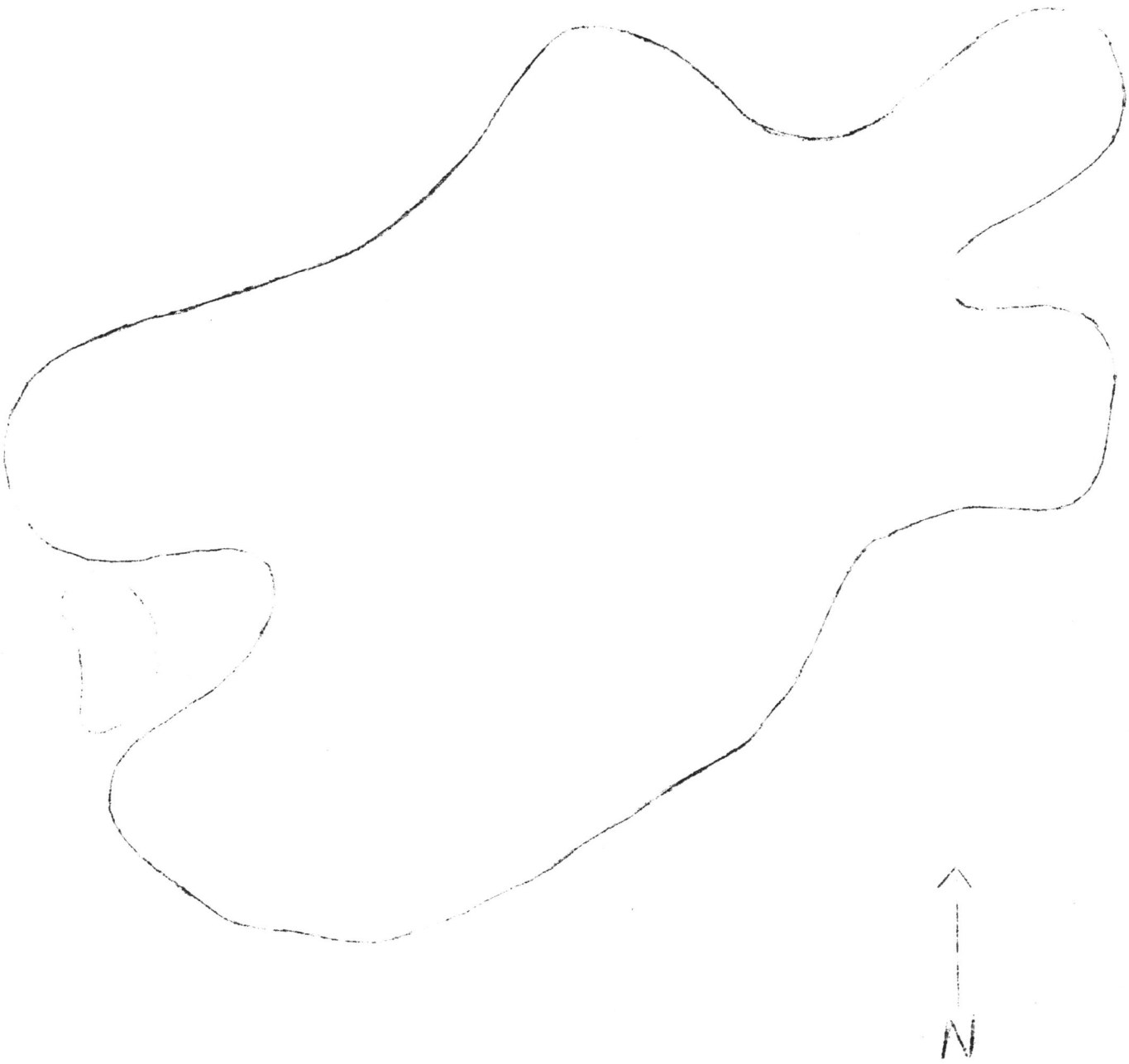
Write below what you did about the problem and why you did it (the group has to agree on all decisions.)

MATERIAL TO BE USED FOR THE SIMULATION:

1. Transparencies which represent geographical features of REMOTE ISLAND are made using appropriate felt tip pens.
2. Role cards are put on 4 x 6 index cards. There are five cards or one for each member of the group.

APPENDIX B

REMOTE ISLAND



REMOTE ISLAND GROUP _____ CARD I

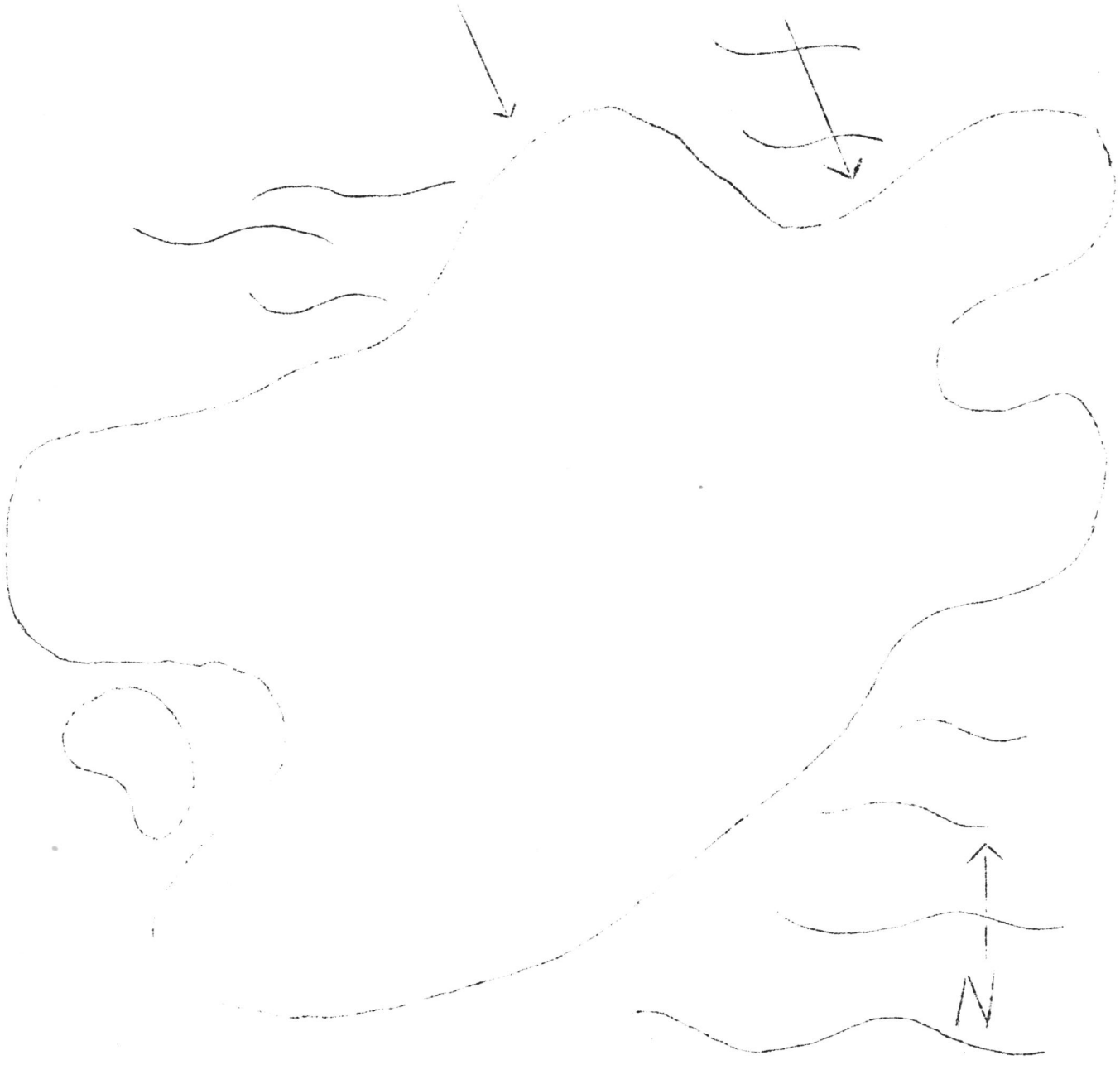
PREVAILING WINDS

BLUE WATER SYMBOLS

GREEN WIND SYMBOLS

RED NORTH DIRECTION

PREVAILING WINDS



REMOTE ISLAND GROUP _____ CARD 2

LAND FORMS

MOUNTAINS (BLACK)

HILLS (ORANGE)

PLAINS (YELLOW)

REMOTE ISLAND GROUP _____ CARD 3

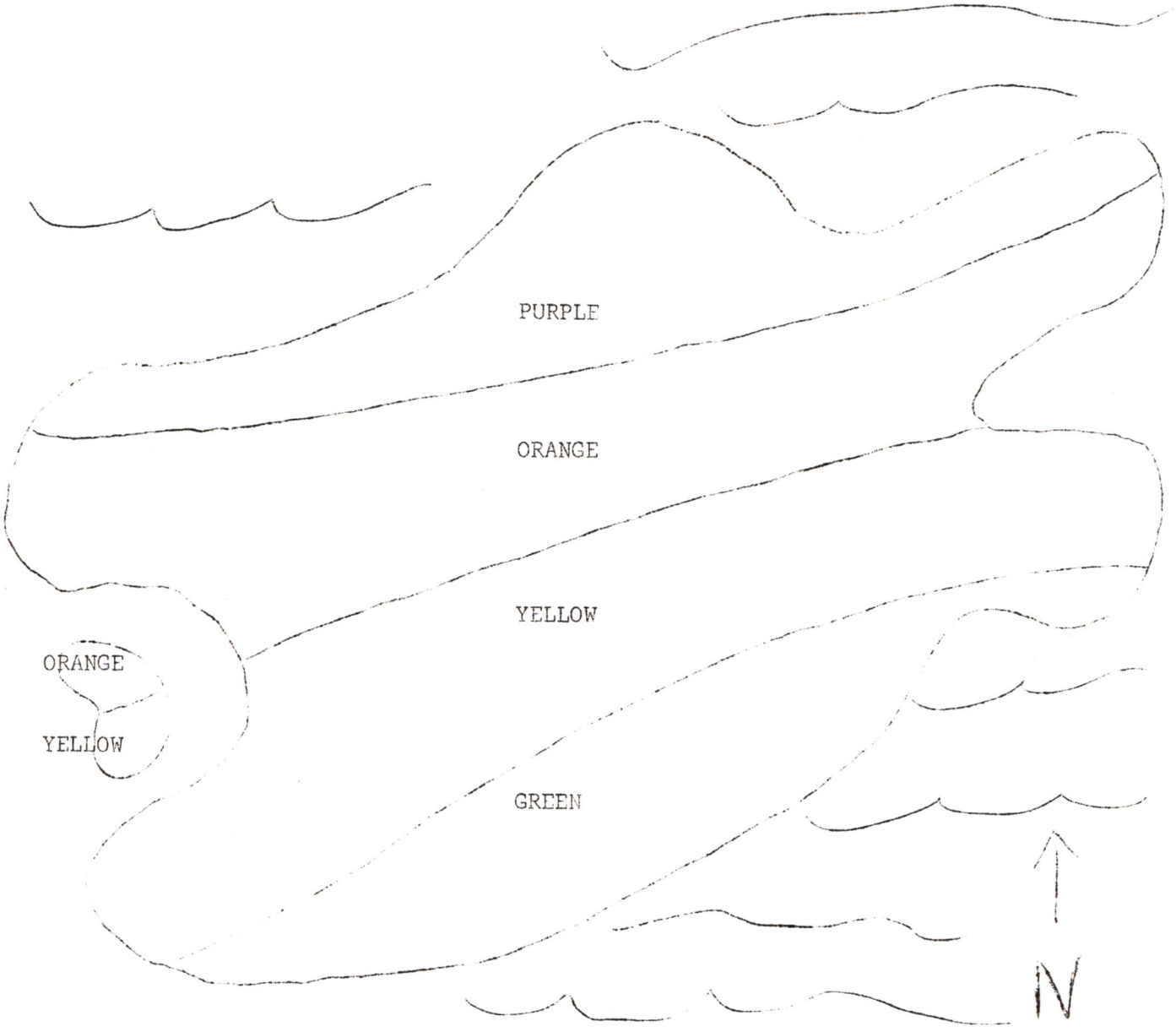
RAINFALL

100 + INCHES PER YEAR (PURPLE)

6 to 10 INCHES PER YEAR (ORANGE)

10 to 15 INCHES PER YEAR (YELLOW)

20 to 25 INCHES PER YEAR (GREEN)



REMOTE ISLAND GROUP _____ CARD 4

LAKES AND RIVERS

LAKE (BLUE)

RIVER (GREEN)

SCALE: 6 inches =50 miles

REMOTE ISLAND GROUP _____ CARD 6

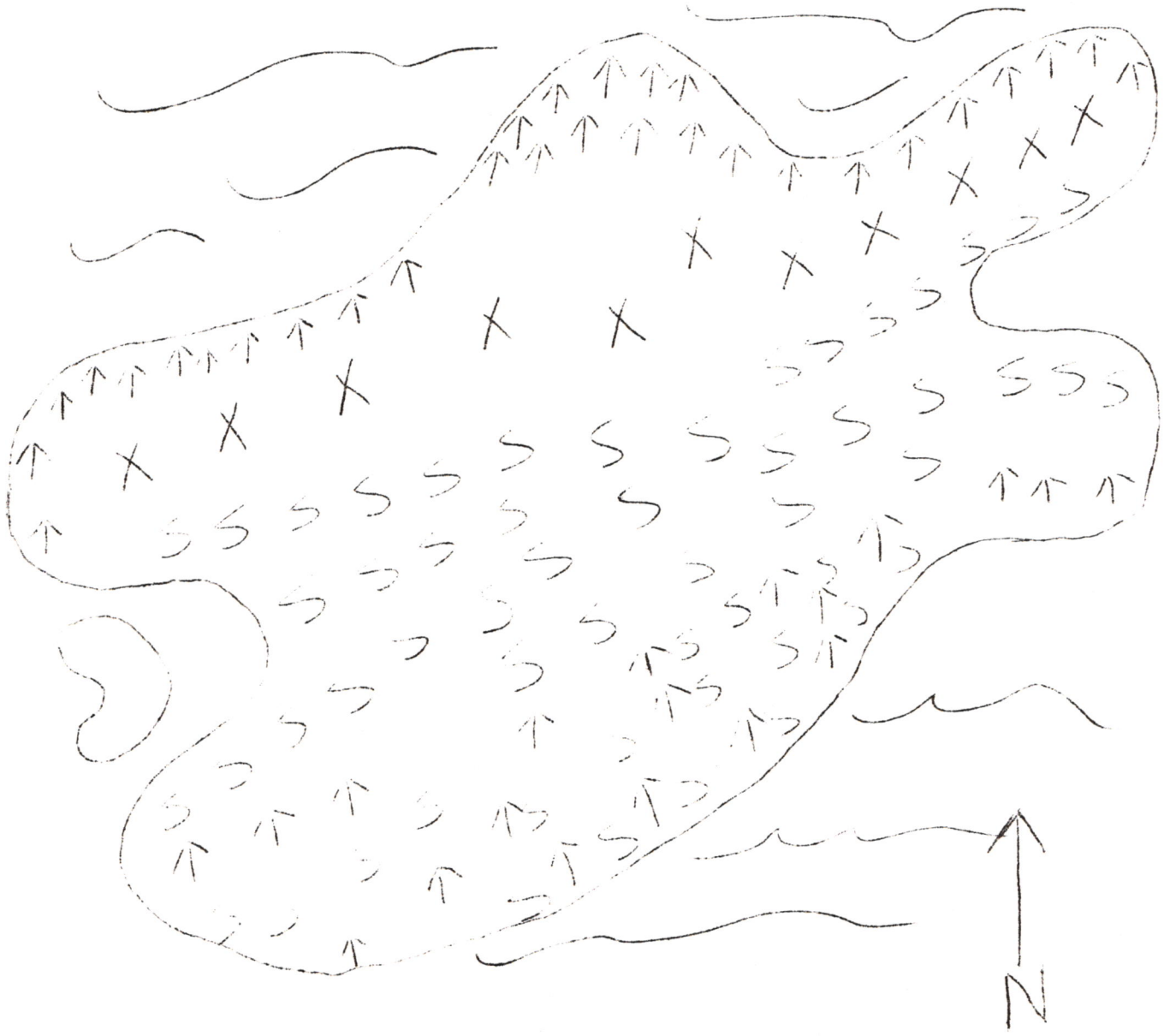
FOLIAGE

TREES (GREEN)

NO FOLIAGE (BROWN)

GRASSES (ORANGE)

TREES AND GRASSES (GREEN AND ORANGE)



Role Playing Cards:*

Card No. 1. - Your name is Bill Waters. You are the owner of a group of fish processing plants with the home office located in Boston. You have learned of the good fishing around REMOTE ISLAND and you think there would be a good market and profit in a fish processing plant. The only problem you see is that the local fishermen of the island fish in the same area. You are to try to convince the other members of your group that putting a processing plant on the island is a good thin

Card No. 2. - Your name is Jack Boatwright. You are a fisherman. You make your living by fishing around different parts of the island. You have no trouble selling the fish that you catch to the fish markets of the island.

Card No. 3. - Your name is Mr. Vote. You are the mayor of the small town where the processing plant could be located. You realize that you could be a much stronger politician in this area if the processing plant were to locate here and you could be responsible for supplying the labor for it. You want to work with Mr. Waters about this.

Card No. 4. - Your name is Jack Wilson. You are a hippie from a western college in the United States. You have quit school and left the United States because the U.S. Government has encouraged large companies to monopolize over the little man. You have come to the island because no such monopoly exists.

Card No. 5. - Your name is Mrs. Homington and you are a housewife and mother. You represent a group of housewives who are interested in the processing plant and whether it is coming to the island or not. You listen to the arguments and ask some questions, but you don't know what to believe about all this.

*For role playing it might be a good idea for each student to listen to a recording of his role taken from his role card; then the student should be able to read his own card.