

Memo: Newt considered punishing colleagues

9/29/96
WASHINGTON (AP) - A piece of computer mail, circulated widely in the Capitol, quotes House Speaker Newt Gingrich as considering punishment for three GOP lawmakers blocking passage of a farm bill the leadership supports.

Rep. Larry Combest of Texas could be stripped of his chairmanship of the Intelligence Committee. Rep. Bill Emerson of Missouri could be denied a chairman's post when his turn comes. And Rep. Richard Baker of Louisiana could simply be moved off the Agriculture Committee.

Mr. Gingrich sketched these options, alongside other, less punitive strategies, at a closed-door meeting last week at which the GOP high command reviewed efforts to win approval of a \$13.4 billion package of savings from farm programs. Republican Reps. Combest,

Emerson, Baker and Saxby Chambliss of Georgia all voted against a proposal backed by the Agriculture Committee chairman, Rep. Pat Roberts of Kansas, joining with Democrats to defeat the measure.

The discussions were disclosed in a memorandum summarizing the meeting that a GOP aide inadvertently sent via e-mail to a Democratic aide - an ironic mistake in the reign of a speaker enthralled by cyberspace. Democrats swiftly made sure the Capitol was flooded with copies.

"He listed those options, none of them are going to be used," Mr. Gingrich's spokesman, Tony Blankley, said Thursday.