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## Mouthy and not-so-mouthy: how Manitoba MPs stack up

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If there is a race in Ottawa to be the MP with the most to say, Manitoba's Kevin Lamoureux won the silver medal.

According to Samara Canada, a non-profit think tank aiming to improve political participation, [an analysis of words spoken in the House of Commons in 2012](#) showed Lamoureux delivered 222,451 words last year, just a few thousand shy of the 226,027 words spoken by the NDP's Peter Julian.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May was in the bronze position with 174,783 words. The Conservatives' Kellie Leitch was in the usually unenviable fourth position with 120,835 words.

Samara's study looked at 54 days of debate in the House of Commons and then extrapolated to figure out how many words the MPs likely spoke over the full 129 days where the House of Commons sat last year.

As a point of comparison Samara also then compared the word counts of MPs to the length of books. Julian's word count is the equivalent of reading Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*. Lamoureux could have read Conrad Black's *A Matter of Principle*.

On the other end of the spectrum some MPs speak so infrequently they barely read a children's book. Conservative MP Rob Anders delivered 963 words, or the equivalent of the book *M is for Maple, A Canadian Alphabet*. Technically Anders is second-last, but the last entry on the list isn't entirely fair. Fisheries Minister Keith Ashfield spoke just 922 words, which is the equivalent to reading *The Cremation of Sam McGhee*. However Ashfield was absent for most of the fall after suffering a heart attack.\*

Peter Penashue, the former minister of intergovernmental affairs who is running for his political life in a byelection in Labrador today, might have some trouble convincing people he truly spoke for Labradorians in the House of Commons since he barely spoke at all. Penashue had the third lowest word count of any MP, at 977 words, the equivalent of Robert Munsch's book *Jonathan Cleaned Up - Then He Heard a Sound*.

The list includes only MPs who were there for the full year, so anyone who quit or was elected half-way through the year isn't on the list.

Elizabeth May is the most talkative party leader, followed by the NDP's Thomas Mulcair, who finished 47th with 44,498 words.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper comes in at 109th, with 26,758 words.

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/blogs/rabson/207257452.html>

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Justin Trudeau is way down the list at 262, with 5,408 words.

Here are the other Manitoba MPs, and their placement out of the 302 MPs included.

30. Pat Martin, 52,154

63. Shelly Glover, 39,063

68. Candice Bergen, 36,963

133. Joy Smith, 23,081

135. Niki Ashton, 22,850

154. Vic Toews, 19,156

174. Lawrence Toet, 16,249

185. Robert Sopuck, 14,888

214. James Bezan, 10,834

218. Merv Tweed, 10,217

228. Joyce Bateman, 9,651

250. Steven Fletcher, 6,837

268. Rod Bruinooge, 4,847

It's important to note these counts include only debates in the House itself, not participation in committees.

UPDATE: Samara has updated its report to note a mistake on the count with regards to Fisheries Minister Keith Ashfield. A mistake in their calculations had Ashfield speaking just 922 words, the least of any MP in the House of Commons. Samara now says Ashfield spoke 9,529 words, which puts him at 231 of the 302 MPs on the list. This number should still be taken with a grain of salt, since as mentioned above, Ashfield was absent for at least two months in 2012 after he suffered a heart attack.