

It's a fact!

Sen. Harry Cannon of St. Paul probably would have done well as a 16th century Briton.

"The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers," Shakespeare wrote in 1591.

It was Cannon who, on Valentine's Day in 1929, made a resolution to drive the legal profession from the Legislature.

Born in Wisconsin, Cannon dabbled in many fields of study — including law — before becoming a surgeon in 1905.

Upset with the increasing number of lawyers in the Legislature, Cannon took his case to the Senate floor, where 29 of its members were lawyers.

He proposed that a committee of five be selected from "among the clergyman, physicians, newspapermen, farmers, and other honest working men of this body, whose duty it shall be to devise some plan to reduce the sum total of the legal profession herein and restore as it were the balance that should prevail in membership with regard to the different crafts, occupations and so forth."

The measure never did receive a vote, but time has partially corrected the imbalance that Sen. Cannon perceived. Today, there are only 11 lawyers in the Senate.



Sen. Harry Cannon

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society