



“Mr. Ingersoll’s Speech,” *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, 25 August 1862, page 1

Charles Ingersoll, Esq., the next speaker, said: Fellow citizens – I rise to support these resolutions, and I would support, if necessary, resolutions a little stronger; but the truth is the time for discussion and for resolutions has passed, and we have arrived at within six weeks of the time when we are to go to the ballot box and settle – I hope forever – the question which for the last eighteen months has distracted this country, and in regard to which so much effort has been made to bring the great Democratic party into disrepute. As I understand it, the Democratic party is now the majority of the people of Pennsylvania, [cheers] and I trust that in the neighboring States they will prove, when the elections take place, that they are also in the majority there. I am sure that in the States of Maryland, Missouri, Kentucky and Delaware, and all of those Southern States remaining with us, the Democrat party is in the majority. When we go to the ballot box in the fall we shall accomplish an object, and that is the only reason why the Democratic party is so loudly denounced in the Republican papers, and why this meeting had been especially denounced and threatened. I don’t know the names of the papers – I don’t read them – there are few papers in Philadelphia which a Democrat need read. But I remind you that all Democrats who ventured to come to this meeting have been denounced as traitors, as disaffected persons – as men unworthy of the name of citizen. The only reason for that is that the party is in the majority, and is about to take the power from the Government if you do your duty in the fall, and rally to the Democratic party, the only rallying point that can save the county, we shall take the power forever from the hands of the Republicans, and the Republican papers and Republican leaders may well cry out against this meeting, or against any means of rallying the Democratic party, for it is the death knell of their party. [Cheers.] Was ever anything so monstrous as that we should be denounced – that this peaceful meeting should be denounced? I see no riot, no disturbance, no disorder.. Is is not monstrous that the purpose of holding this meeting should be denounced in all parts of the country, and is there any motive to be conceived of save that which I have suggested that we are the majority? If there was no fear of us, if they did not know that we are about to take power from them you would hear no denunciation. [Cheers.] What are we going to do? We are assembled here preparatory to the October election. It is no new thing for thus to meet. We are going to the ballot box to desposit our votes against the party now in power at Washington. [Cheers.] Is there any harm in that? If we are in the majority, and if we know the party in power is ruling to our ruin, why should we not put it down? We think that they rule to ruin us, and having the majority, we may exercise our right of the ballot and put them out. What is the reason for which we think this party should go out of power? We are at the time the most indebted country in the world. We have the heaviest debt in the world and one which has the least possibility of being paid; and we shall soon be the heaviest taxed people; and all of the money that has been raised, how much has been well -applied? How much has been well spent? The Government has raised the largest sum and applied it to the least purpose of any power before. They began with 700,000 soldiers, and are now going to raise 600,000 more. What have they done with that army? What conquests have they made? [Three cheers for McClellan.] What are they doing with McClellan? It is said that he is to be removed. [A voice, never!] Let us wait and see how it is to be. [Cheers for McClellan and Col. Murphy.] I

want to know whether any Government that ever exercised so much power with 700,000 men have accomplished results so insignificant? Are we any further advanced now in the conquest of the Southern States than we were at the beginning? And with what object has this war been prosecuted? I hear the government has lately taken it into consideration to adopt another course. We have no proof that the abolition scheme is dead. But what has been the whole object of the war previously? [A voice, "Free the nigger."] Has there been any other object, and if they accomplish that object; if they turn loose upon us millions of negroes, are we to marry them? are we to work with them? I will tell you what will be the result. These poor negroes, which the abolitionists love much more than you and I, would have their throats cut in a war of the races, and that would be the end of this scheme by Mr. Lincoln. I say further that a more corrupt government was never seen here and seldom seen in the old world. Look at the fortunes made in contracts. Look at the report of the House and Senate Committees! There you will see the evidence that a government as corrupt as this was never imagined until Mr. Lincoln came to power. The Senate refused to exclude a member guilty of taking a bribe to procure a contract, and yet that same Senate has been expelling member after member upon principles more or less freely drawn. If we [?] to put down this Government by going quietly to the ballot box and voting against it, who is to say nay? What are we told by this Government? Democracy is treason, freedom is treason, the press is treason. They say it is treason for the Democratic party to organize itself, it is treason to vote against this Government, or do to anything short of supporting it. We will support the Government and the war because we have been assailed, and I say that the idea that is now given out by these people in Washington that we are not to organize a party is [ridiculous?]. What is there in our way? I don't understand that there is anything in our way, as we have a majority. Ah! Well I see that our friends in different parts of the town have been arrested but, after all, these arrests are not terrible things. If they arrest you, they must feed you and clothe you and lodge you, and, in the hard times, there is something in that. [Laughter.] I know nothing in the way I know of nothing that they have pretended to put in our way, in our march to the ballot box, except the arrest, but if they arrest you and me, they can't arrest the whole Democratic party. Go to the ballot box and give a majority throughout the state and then the wind is taken out of Mr. Lincoln's sails. I want to see the federal government that will dare, in the face of the ascertained majority of the whole country, carry on unconstitutional measures as they have been indulging for the last eighteen months.