Dr. M. M. Roberts, president of the Mississippi Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning, discussed the past, present and future status of higher education in Mississippi and expounded several personal philosophies at the Winter Quarter meeting of the USM chapter of the American Association of University Professors.

President William D. McCain was among the approximately 50 professors attending the 8 p.m. meeting Monday night in Wilbur Stout Hall A.

"I have been on the board for nine and a half years now, and some of them haven't been so pleasant," Dr. Roberts stated.

"The first real task I had for myself was to try to decide what to do with (James) Meredith going to the University of Mississippi, and I said, 'No, he won't go.' I felt like he would go over my dead body."

"But as I've gone along through the years and looked back I've said to myself really that I am a racist. Every time I read a definition I say, 'Well, that's me.'"

"I have no apologies for it, though," he continued. "It's me. And maybe that's the reason why we have some of the problems we have--because of how I feel about certain things that have come out of my childhood long ago, but it's my philosophy. Many of you don't share that philosophy, and that doesn't bother me, and I hope it doesn't bother you that I don't share yours."

Dr. Roberts told the scholars that he admired the late U.S. Senator Theodore Bilbo.

"He's the one who got us off accreditation, and I got tired of hearing that."

"Somebody said, 'If we don't do this we'll lose our accreditation,' and I always said, 'To hell with it,' you know, because what do we have? Do we have education for accreditation, or do we have it to educate boys and girls? Are the schools run for the students, or are the students run for a university complex?"

The noted lawyer quoted a section from the constitution of the Board of Trustees denying them the right to dismiss a faculty member for political reasons. However, he added, "It's difficult to do what we say there...because of this one thing: we get our money from the legislature."