

Mr. Stagg.

**EXPLORER LEFT
HANGING IN CHASM**

LIFELINE JAMMED

From Our Own Correspondent

PARIS, Monday.

M. Jose Bidegain, of the Franco-Spanish speleological expedition into the Central Pyrenees caverns, was left hanging for some time when the wire rope on which he was being lowered jammed yesterday. It was in a similar accident that M. Marcel Loubens was killed last year.

Eventually M. Bidegain was hauled safely to the surface by electric winch. Other members of the expedition were below in the pot-hole, the Gouffre Lepineux, where M. Loubens's body still lies.

Exploration of the caverns has been slowed down by the railway strike which held up delivery of parachute harnesses in which the men are lowered.

D. Tel.

11/8/53.

Cave-men did not turn back

By GEOFFREY MURRAY

THE man hung spinning in space, like a human spider, at the end of a thread of steel cable.

For five days he had lived 1,200 feet below ground in the Pyrenees helping in the exploration of the world's deepest cave.

Now he was taking off to return to the surface, to the sunlight and the wind, away from the darkness, the cold, and the wet of life underground.

A good start

"Good-bye. Have a good trip," his fellow explorers told him. "Regards to all on top. Make them send us some reinforcements. Tell them there can never be too many people on this sort of job."

Below him a photographer watched intently with his eye

pressed to his camera. The man was revolving so that the lamp on his breast flashed on and off like the beam of a minute lighthouse, one flash a second.

And then there came a brief cry of distress. The light came plunging down the shaft. The cable had parted. The man's body crashed at the feet of the photographer, three steps away. His back and his jaw were broken.

That happened last August. The man was Marcel Loubens, one of the best-known pot-holders in France.

Reporters told the story of all that was done on the surface to try to save him. Now Loubens's companion, Haroun Tazieff, tells in *Caves of Adventure* (Hamish Hamilton, 12s. 6d.) what happened below ground.

All in vain

Loubens, who never regained consciousness, was strapped to the stretcher. He was given numerous injections. A blood transfusion was performed. But all was in vain.

The winch had again broken down, so that it was impossible to move the injured man. He died after 36 hours. He was buried by his companions in the cave under a cairn of stones.

Tazieff and a companion determined not to return to the surface until they had resumed the exploration of the caves and, if possible, discovered a passage leading still lower.

They found this outlet, and traced the course of an important subterranean river. This discovery is capable of changing the hydro-electric facilities and the economic development of the entire region.

New Johnson.

13/8/53.