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Before the mid 1860 ' s, the impact of the railroads in the United States was limited, in the sense that the tracks ended at this Missouri River, approximately the center of the country. At the point the trains turned their freight, mail, and passengers over to steamboats, wagons, and stagecoaches. This meant that wagon freighting, stage coaching, and steam boating did not come to an end when the first train appeared. rather they became supplements or feeders. Each new " endoftrack " became a center for animal drawn or waterborne transportation. The major effect of the railroad was to shorten the distance that had to be covered by the older, slower, and more costly means. Wagon freighters continued operating throughout the 1870 ' s and 1880 ' s and into the 1890 ' s. Although over constantly shrinking routes, and coaches and wagons continued to crisscross the West wherever the rails had not yet been laid. The beginning of a major change was foreshadowed in the later 1860 ' s, when the Union Pacific Railroad at last began to build westward from the Central Plains city of Omaha to meet the Central Pacific Railroad advancing eastward from California through the formidable barrier of the Sierra Nevada. Although President Abraham Lincoln signed the original Pacific Railroad bill in 1862 and a revised, financially much more generous version in 1864, little construction was completed until 1865 on the Central Pacific and 1866 on the Union Pacific. The primary reason was skepticism that a

Railroad built through so challenging and thinly settled a stretch of desert, mountain, and semiarid plain could pay a profit. In the words of an economist, this was a case of “ premature enterprise ” , where not only the cost of construction but also the very high risk deterred private investment. In discussing the Pacific Railroad bill, the chair of the congressional committee bluntly stated that without government subsidy no one would undertake so unpromising a venture. yet it was a national necessity to link East and West together. 16. The author refers to the impact of railroads before the late 1860 ’ s as “ limited ” because \_\_\_\_\_. A. the track did not take the direct route from one city to the next B. passengers and freight had to transfer to other modes of transportation to reach western destinations C. passengers preferred stagecoaches D. railroad travel was quite expensive 17. What can be inferred about coaches and wagon freighters as the railroad expanded? A. They developed competing routes. B. Their drivers refused to work for the railroads. C. They began to specialize in private investment. D. There were insufficient numbers of trained people to operate them. 18. Why does the author mention the Sierra Nevada in line 17? A. To argue that a more direct route to the West could have been taken. B. To identify a historically significant mountain range in the West. C. To point out the location of a serious train accident. D. To give an example of an obstacle faced by the central pacific. 19. The word “ subsidy ” in line 27 is closest in meaning to \_\_\_\_\_. A. persuasion B. financing C. explanation D. penalty

答案和解析： 16. B)根据文章前五句可知，在十九世纪六十年代晚期前铁路在美国的影响是有限的“ limited ”，

当时铁路只从美国东部修到了美国中部，运到美国西部地区的货物只有在铁路的尽头“end of track”改用其他的运输方式，比如：汽船、马车等，它们的运输效率可想而知。故选项B为正确答案。

17. D)这是一道推论题。可用排除法做此题。根据文章第六行至第七行“rather they became supplements or feeders”和第十行至第十三行“Wagon freighters continued operating throughout the 1870's and 1880's and into the 1890's. Although over constantly shrinking routes, and coaches and wagons continued to crisscross the West wherever the rails had not yet been laid.”可知随着铁路线的不断延伸，马车货运的路线日益减少，虽然马车货运经营者们继续在西部发展货运线路，但是它们只是铁路运输的补充。因此选项A“他们发展了有竞争性的线路”可以排除。而选项B、C文中根本没有提及。故只有选项D为正确答案。

18. D)根据“the Sierra Nevada”所在句可知作者提到它是因为它是修建横跨东西铁路的一个巨大的障碍，故D为正确答案。

19. B)Subsidy意为“补助金，津贴”，与financing意义相符。

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