3. (A) If there is a DOS diskette in Drive A:, the computer will load the DOS Command Processor files into RAM memory.

   (B) If there is no diskette in Drive A: or the door is open, the computer will load the DOS Command Processor files into RAM memory from the hard disk (C:).

4. Once loaded into RAM, DOS takes control of the system and immediately looks for a file called CONFIG.SYS (in the root directory) and, if found, performs the instructions contained therein (see Section 2.1.8.2 for further information).

5. Then, DOS looks for a file called AUTOEXEC.BAT (in the root directory) and, if found, performs the instructions contained therein (see Section 2.1.8.3 for further information).

6. At this point, DOS will display the SYSTEM PROMPT and wait patiently for your command.

2.1.3.1 The System Prompt and the Default Drive/Directory

When the computer has completed the process described above, the System Prompt will appear on screen and should look like this:

   C>

with a flashing cursor to the right of the > sign. The Prompt may appear differently if it has been changed with a PROMPT Command executed by AUTOEXEC.BAT.

The letter C shown in the prompt is the Default Drive. The term Default Drive means that DOS will execute commands and look for programs on the Drive displayed in the Prompt, unless you specify otherwise.

On the hard disk, things can get a little more involved. Because a hard disk may be logically divided into a number of directories, the Default Drive may become a Default Directory as well. If you use the CD command (Section 2.1.6.1) to change the active directory, then DOS will execute commands and look for programs in the currently active directory. (More about this later in the sections on Hard Disk Organization and the PATH command.)

2.1.3.2 Switching Drives

The Default Drive may be changed by simply entering the name of the desired drive. For example, typing

   A:<Return>

at the System Prompt will switch the Default to Drive A:, as long as Drive A: contains a formatted floppy disk, otherwise the message

   Drive not ready: Abort, Retry, Ignore?

will appear. At this point, you may place a formatted floppy in Drive A: and press "R", or press "A" to abort the switching process.

≡FASTFACTS   *Typing Disk Drive Names*

- A disk drive name MUST include both the letter and the colon.